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The construction of Muslim identities in the
United Kingdom and France:
a contribution to the critique of Orientalism

Malcolm David Brown

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Glasgow

Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences

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Abstract

This thesis makes a contribution to the critique of Orientalism, through a theoretical analysis and empirical observation of the construction of Muslim identities in the United Kingdom and France. It examines Western stereotypes of Islam, particularly of Muslims in the West, and ways in which they have responded, through the construction of Muslim identities, to these stereotypes. The central contribution lies in joining these issues, establishing a dialectic of Orientalism and Muslim identities. The thesis focuses on the stereotype of Islam as homogeneous, the sociological reality that Islam and Muslim identities are diverse, and posits the same dialectical relationship between these phenomena.

Part I examines Western representations of Islam, and begins with a theoretical and historical view of Orientalism, starting from Edward Said's work. It also insists on the diversity of Orientalist and Muslim perspectives, emphasises the mutual constitution of Islam and the West, and analyses their active participation in a process of polarisation. The thesis goes on to analyse the concept of Islamophobia, and argues it encapsulates an aspect of current reality, though it refers to diverse phenomena. Other representations of Islam, particularly in the media, are examined in the following chapter, which discusses stereotypes of exoticism, fanaticism, delinquency, and an emergent critique of Islamophobia.

Part II focuses on Muslim identities in the United Kingdom and France, and examines ways in which Muslims, through the construction of Muslim identities,

incorporate or reject Western representations of Islam. It begins by discussing theories of identity, and develops a sociological framework for understanding Muslim identities. It goes on to show, and this is a central contribution of the thesis, that Muslim identities are diverse, and this diversity represents different responses to the stereotype of Islam as homogeneous. It describes and analyses different meanings and articulations of Islam, diverse sources of Muslim identities, and the combination of Muslim identities with other identities.

The following chapters identify arenas in which Islam and the West actually meet, and thus examines the dialectic of Orientalism and Muslim identities more closely. Chapter 7 considers theoretical and empirical relationships between Muslim identities and national identities. Chapter 8 examines the educational sphere in a British-French comparative perspective, and focuses particularly on the cultural meanings of the *hijab* (Islamic headscarf). Finally, Chapter 9 describes, and analyses the significance of, Muslim-Christian dialogue, an arena in which Islam meets the 'Christian West', and in which a diversity of Muslim identities is developed. The conclusion corroborates the dialectic of Orientalism and Muslim identities, emphasises comparisons between the United Kingdom and France, and suggests directions for future research.

... knowledge of Islam and Islamic peoples has generally proceeded not only from dominance and confrontation but also from cultural antipathy. Today Islam is defined negatively as that with which the West is radically at odds, and this tension establishes a framework radically limiting knowledge of Islam (Said 1997b: 163).

... ce que tu as à l'intérieur, c'est l'islam... (interviewee cited in Kepel 1991: 31).

O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes that ye may know each other (The Qur'an, *Al Hujurat*, 49:13).

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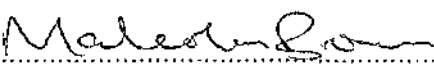
This thesis could never have been written without the co-operation of a number of respondents, many of them members of the Muslim communities in Glasgow and Lille. I

hope I have not betrayed their trust, and although I will certainly have written some things with which they disagree, I trust they will recognise that I have striven to write with integrity and gratitude to them.

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Author's declaration

I declare that this thesis is entirely my own work, and that it was all carried out between 1 October 1995 and 30 April 1999.

(signed) 

Malcolm David Brown

1. Introduction

1.1. A sociological reflection on the diversity of Islam

This thesis is about Western perceptions of Islam, particularly of Muslims in the West, and the ways in which these perceptions contribute to the construction of Muslim identities in the West. Within the West, the thesis focuses on a comparison between the United Kingdom and France. It examines the relationship between, on the one hand, an identity which is theologically based, and, on the other hand, a set of Western stereotypes which are contingent on the historical antagonism between Islam and the West, and the material conditions of Muslim migration to Western Europe in the second half of the twentieth century. The specific stereotype which constitutes the focus for this thesis is that of Islam as homogeneous and unchanging, which, as we shall see, is central to the Orientalist perception of Islam. In reality, however, Islam and Muslim identities are diverse, and there are connections between the homogeneous perception and the diverse reality.

Ibn al-ʿArabi, the great Muslim theologian and Sufi master of the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, addressed some of the same issues in a theological way, and it is worth beginning with his argument in order to establish a context for this thesis. Having done so, this introduction outlines and discusses: (i) the rationales for the thesis, and for the British-French comparison which is integral to it; (ii) the questions and hypotheses which are addressed; (iii) the structure of the thesis; (iv) the methodology of

the study; (v) the contributions which are made; and (vi) the relevant academic literature, which is a continuation of the discussion about the contributions.

Ibn al-‘Arabi argued that God was the source of all diversity, including diversity of beliefs about God. He wrote:

God Himself is the first problem of diversity that has become manifest in the cosmos. The first thing that each existent thing looks upon is the cause of its own existence. In itself each thing knows that it was not, and that it then came to be through temporal origination. However, in this coming to be, the dispositions of the existent things are diverse. Hence they have diverse opinions about the identity of the cause that brought them into existence. Therefore the Real is the first problem of diversity in the cosmos (cited in Chittick 1994: 4).

Ibn al-‘Arabi expounds this thinking in a commentary on ‘the circle of religious diversity’, which argues that the revealed religions are diverse because of the diversity of the divine relationships, or divine names, which encapsulate God’s ways of dealing with the diversity of the cosmos. This is because the diverse parts of the cosmos have different needs (‘the diversity of the states’), so relate to the divine creator in different ways. These states are diverse because of their tendency to fluctuate according to time, which itself is diverse because of the movement of the celestial bodies. These movements are diverse because God gives to each of them a specific divine attentiveness, that is, considers them and causes them to operate in different ways, which God does because of a diversity of goals, or intentions for each of these objects. These goals are diverse to facilitate a diversity of divine self-revelations, which are themselves diverse

because of the diversity of the revealed religions, and this closes the circle (Chittick 1994: 157-60).

Now, there is a certain medieval charm to this manner of philosophising, which, to the Western reader, may seem reminiscent of the works of Thomas Aquinas or Anselm of Canterbury. Despite its medieval character, it has a definite place in the foundations of Muslim thought. The Qur'an says: 'O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female and made you into different nations and tribes that ye may know each other' (The Qur'an, *Al Hujurat*, 49:13). Clearly, the thinking here is that diversity does not necessarily entail division or conflict, but is an effective way of understanding our own diversity as human beings. In Western Christian philosophy, it has been possible to take this further due to the emphasis on divine diversity, encapsulated most clearly in the doctrine of the Trinity, and this has contemporary secular equivalents in the emphasis on diversity which can be found in existentialist or postmodern thought. This is precluded in Islam by the doctrine of *tawhid*, divine unicity.

Of course, Muslim theological discourse is contingent on a number of assumptions, without which it would (arguably) not be Muslim, nor would it have developed in the way which it has. Centrally, there is a belief in the existence of God, the veracity of the first *shahada*—'*ashadu ana la illaha illa allah*', which translates as 'I bear witness that there is no god but God', or, more pertinently, 'I am (as an existential statement about my Being) bearing witness that there is no god but The God'. There is also a belief in divine revelation, in the Qur'an *and elsewhere* (principally the Torah, the Psalms and the *Injil*, or Gospel). Because there is revelation in more than one place, there is already a seed of religious diversity in the very core of Islam. However, for the sociologist, there is an important problem with this form of thought, which is the first reason why it needs to be transcended before we can even begin this thesis. The form of thought which I

have described starts from the premise of methodological theism, and this is as inconsistent with sociological discourse as it is axiomatic to much theological discourse.

Sociological interpretations of religion tend to start from the premise of either methodological atheism, assuming that God does not exist and that religion is a human and social project, or methodological agnosticism, assuming that we must suspend judgement on the existence or non-existence of God for the purposes of sociological enquiry. These have been the most common methodological premises in sociological discourse, but they are not the only ones which are available. It seems to me that a 'methodological existentialism', which recognises the existence of God as an existential reality for the believer, is legitimate, or even a 'methodological Pascalianism', which regards it as necessary to 'wager' on the existence or non-existence of God, and proceed *as if* this were certain. My own approach is probably a combination of methodological agnosticism and methodological existentialism.

There is another important difference between the sort of theological discourse represented above by Ibn al-ʿArabi and sociological discourse, which, as will become apparent, is particularly important to this thesis. A theological approach would define Muslims according to an already existing conception of Islam, that is, as those who believe and practice Islam, whereas a sociological approach would define Islam as the beliefs and practices of Muslims, or of those who define themselves as Muslims and are generally recognised as such by (other) Muslims. This means that Islam is diverse by definition, but we cannot establish the diversity of Islam simply by definition, nor can we account for it solely theoretically. We must take a longer approach.

Let us begin by asking three questions, which must be clearly distinguished from each other: what is religion; what is a religion; and what is a confession?¹ Since its

¹ By a confession, I mean any religious sect, denomination, *maslak* (distinctive school of thought within Islam which has some form of central organisation), or distinctive sub-grouping within a religion.

inception, the sociology of religion has been bogged down with the first of these questions. Durkheim (1915: 23-47, especially 47) famously defined religion as a separation of the sacred and the profane which gathered people together in religious communities, but this is not always the case. Consider hermits who purposely separate themselves from all community, or political theologies (from liberation theology at one end of the spectrum to theocracy at the other) which attempt to *subsume* the profane under the sacred. Weber, perhaps more wisely, began his *Sociology of Religion* with the dictum: 'To define "religion", to say what it is, is not possible at the start of a presentation such as this. Definition can be attempted, if at all, only at the conclusion of the study' (Weber 1993: 1). However, the reader who searches through this work of Weber in the hope of finding such a definition will be disappointed.

Perhaps the lesson to be drawn is that sociologists are mistaken in trying to define religion too precisely. I propose a definition of religion which combines the seemingly contrasting definitions of two sociologists, Peter Berger and Alain Touraine. Berger (1973: 37) defines religion as 'the audacious attempt to conceive of the entire universe as humanly significant', which implies a consciousness of an anthropocentric sacred cosmos, while Touraine (1974: 213-4) says that religion is 'the apprehension of human destiny, existence, and death', that is, an awareness of human limitations. While Berger emphasises the high place for human beings in religion, and Touraine emphasises our place on the periphery, these are both necessary characteristics of religion. In the case of Islam, the Islamic understanding of the anthropocentric sacred cosmos and of human limitations is what defines the Islamic understanding of religion.

Following from this, I would define *a* religion (as opposed to religion *qua* something generic) as an ensemble of questions arising from the sacred cosmos and human limitations, and from a specific understanding of, or attempt to understand, the

sacred cosmos and human limitations. Wilfred Cantwell Smith addresses the same problem by analysing the Arabic word *din*, usually translated 'religion'. It is worth taking a moment to consider this in detail. Smith (1978: 81) writes that:

... the Arabic language has, and has had since the appearance of Islam and indeed from shortly before, a term and concept that seem to be quite closely equivalent to the Western 'religion'. Indeed this word—namely, *din*—is used in all the various senses of its Western counterpart. It carried the sense of personal religion: the classical dictionaries give *wara'*, 'piety' as an equivalent, a word that never has a systematic or community meaning and that cannot have a plural. It carries also, however, the sense of a particular religious system, one 'religion' as distinct from another. In this sense it has a plural (*adyan*). This plural is not in the Qur'an, but is traditional. Furthermore, the word in its systematic sense can be used both ideally and objectively, of one's own religion and of other people's, the true religion and false ones.

So there is a tension between the conception of *din* as religion and as a religion, but there is an early consciousness of a collective term which denotes one's own religion and the religion of 'outsiders'. In contrast, such a collective use of the Latin *religio* only came about in Europe after the Renaissance and Reformation, prior to which other religions were regarded as 'sects' or 'heresies' (Smith 1978: 83). It should be noted, however, that, while *religio* came to imply a distinction between a secular and a religious sphere, *din* did not have this connotation (Smith 1978: 92). In fact, *din* had three meanings in the Arabian peninsula of the seventh century: the concept of systematic religion; the act of 'judging' or 'passing sentence', and, by extension, 'judgement' or

'verdict'; and the verbal noun of the verb 'to conduct oneself, to behave, to observe certain practices, to follow traditional usage, to conform', and therefore 'conformity, propriety, obedience' and 'usages, customs, standard behaviour', a noun which could only exist in the singular form (Smith 1978: 101-2). These meanings combine what contemporary Westerners would regard as religious and secular concepts, though they do not *necessarily* mean that Islam is incompatible with the concept of the secular, as many writers have suggested.

When the word *islam* is used in the Qur'an, it does not have the reified meaning which Islam has today. Once more I cite Wilfred Cantwell Smith (1978: 110):

If we look carefully at the Qur'an, we find, first of all, that the term *islam* there is relatively much less used than are other related but more dynamic and personal terms; and secondly, that when it is used it can be, and on many grounds almost must be, interpreted not as the name of a religious system but as the designation of a decisive personal act.

So when *islam* is an essentially personal act, it is inevitably diverse. But what about Islam, the reified religious system? To begin to answer this, we can ask the third question alluded to above: what is a confession? Or, to put that differently, what are the conditions and expressions of religious diversity? Let us say firstly that a confession is a set of responses, and a framework for responding, to the questions raised by a religion, that defining a religion as an ensemble of questions leads us to suppose that there will be different answers to these questions, that is, religious diversity, and that the tension in our understanding between the sacred cosmos and human limitation is a cause of religious diversity.

The religious diversity which exists in Islam must be represented with a multi-dimensional model. We can cite the differences between *masalik* (distinctive schools of thought within Islam which have some form of central organisation), *madhahib* (schools of Islamic jurisprudence and interpretation of Islamic law), *tariqa* (usually, though not exclusively, used to refer to Sufi orders). There are differences between the Sufis and 'orthodox' Muslims (or, to use more value-neutral terminology, between those who take an esoteric and those who take an exoteric view of the Qur'an), there are different interpretations of the five pillars (for example, some Sufis have understood the first *shahada* in a way which has overtones of pantheism, Ismaili Muslims pray three times daily and do not fast during Ramadhan since they see fasting in more symbolic terms as avoiding what is considered to be wrong), and there are different understandings and practices of Islam based on a rural/urban dichotomy, which has been analysed by a number of scholars from Ibn Khaldun (1958; originally drafted in 1377) to Ernest Gellner (1969, 1981).² All the diversities listed above can be caused by linguistic, cultural, political, economic, social and historical factors, as well as by factors of identity, and in turn have an influence on language, culture, politics, economies, societies, history and identities. Religious diversity in Islam must be understood sociologically in circular terms.

To conceptualise this differently, religion is diverse because society is diverse. This kind of thinking will be familiar to anybody with a knowledge of liberation theology, particularly its use of the hermeneutic circle. This is defined by Juan Luis Segundo (1991: 9) as 'the continuing change in our interpretation of the Bible which is dictated by the continuing changes in our present-day reality, both individual and societal'. In the case of Islam, we can read the Qur'an in place of the Bible. The hermeneutic circle

² This can be compared with Ali Mili's (n.d.) doctoral thesis, which shows that Tunisian migrants to France have had very different experiences based on their urban or rural background, since the latter have undergone a 'double migration' (rural to urban and Tunisia to France).

begins with questions and suspicion about one's real situation (which, in classical liberation theology, comes from an experience of poverty), which produces a political liberative praxis, which in turn leads to a new interpretation of scripture, and this forms the basis of a theology of liberation. A theology of liberation can provide a framework for questions and suspicion about one's real situation, which 'closes' the hermeneutic circle (or, rather, enables it to continue). So theology can undergo 'paradigm shifts' in response to social and intellectual changes (compare Küng 1992, 1995), or a subversive theology can emerge, which subverts the religion 'from within' (see Cupitt 1986), a principle which will be familiar from Adorno's (1973: 365) dictum: 'If negative dialectics calls for the self-reflection of thinking, the tangible implication is that if thinking is to be true—if it is to be true today, in any case—it must also be a thinking against itself.' There is a power structure within the *ummah*, the worldwide 'community' of Muslims, but this can be challenged using the tools of Islam, and the power of Muslim identities. Where these Muslim identities exist, diversity will also exist.

1.2. Rationales

This brings us to a point where we can outline the questions and hypotheses which this thesis addresses. Before doing so, however, I want to outline some of the rationales behind writing a thesis on this subject. There are, of course, personal motivations, but the sociological rationales are pressing, so I shall focus on three of them: the importance of Islam in contemporary media, political and popular discourses; the importance of religious identities in the modern world, and for contemporary sociological theory; and the importance of a critique of Orientalism to contemporary sociological thought.

The first of these rationales is that Islam is an important subject in contemporary media discourse, which has shaped political and popular consciousness about the 'problems' and 'conflicts' of the post-cold-war world. Indeed, Samuel Huntington's thesis about a 'clash of civilisations', particularly between Islam and the West, runs the risk of becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy. When Washington believes that this is going to happen, the whole of the Muslim world, which is perceived as homogeneous, is perceived to be the enemy. Thus, a Saudi Arabian exile, living in Afghanistan, is accused of being behind the bombing of United States embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, and the 'measured', 'rational' response is to bomb a medicine factory in Khartoum. Unsurprisingly, this is resented by Muslims, which is seen to confirm the 'clash of civilisations' thesis.

The second rationale indicates that the interaction between national and religious identities is particularly important in the modern world, and in contemporary sociological theory. Belonging to a nation means that we identify ourselves with some people, and exclude others, and that this process of inclusion and exclusion defines the nation, defines who we are, and defines what comes to seem like the very nature of human society. Nations and national identities are not natural, but they are so central to our modes of understanding ourselves and experiencing the world that it is almost impossible to conceive of their absence. It is a tenet of commonsense understanding that every human being belongs to a nation. Yet, for the religious person, the religious identity can be even stronger. When somebody belongs to a religious group, the world of human beings can be divided into the 'believers' and the 'unbelievers'. I could have looked at this dynamic by studying any religious identity. By looking at Islam, and Muslim identities, this thesis focuses on something which is of particular political importance, and I am reminded that identity is more than the way in which Self is constructed. It is

also the way in which the Other is constructed, and in which that construction is internalised.

Thirdly, these are issues which are central to a great deal of contemporary sociological thought, and the importance of Orientalism—as a concept in comparative literature, postcolonial studies and the social sciences—indicates that there is a connection between social theory and social reality at this point. The importance of identity in contemporary theory, particularly postmodern theory and cultural studies, means that this thesis is being situated close to a very fashionable subject area. My own perspective is not so fashionable, though I attempt to take postmodern and related theories seriously. The combined analysis of existential and theological perspectives on identity, the critique of Orientalism, the diversity of Islam, conceptualisations of Islamophobia in relation to racism, and empirical data from the United Kingdom and France, constitutes an important part of the contribution of this thesis, and an important contribution to the field. I discuss the contributions of this thesis in section 1.6, below.

The focus on the construction of Muslim identities in the United Kingdom and France is an integral aspect of this thesis. There are a number of reasons for concentrating on the United Kingdom and France, even though the West as a whole constitutes part of the historical context. Firstly, it is in order to focus the study more effectively. To study the whole of Western Europe would inevitably lead to generalisations, whereas a comparative study of two countries facilitates the identification of similarities and differences. This in turn enables us to distinguish universal characteristics, of Western perceptions of Islam and the construction of Muslim identities in the West, from particular phenomena which can be found in any one country or nation state. Secondly, the United Kingdom and France have quite different models of the nation, including theories of integration, which constitute ideal types and are

therefore amenable to comparison. The model of the United Kingdom is of a multinational state, with a multicultural ethos, while the model of France is of a unitary nation state, with an assimilationist ethos. Thirdly, the two countries have different histories of interaction with Islam through colonialism and migration. This enables us to identify the specific relationship between history and present-day realities, and to control for the differences in country of origin which can be found in the Muslim communities on both sides of the Channel. Fourthly, my familiarity with the majority languages and cultures of these two countries has facilitated research, because it has enabled me to conduct interviews with Muslims and other people, and to situate data in the wider contexts of national life and *mentalités*.

1.3. Hypotheses and questions

The central objective, which follows from my reflection on the diversity of Islam, and from the rationales of the thesis, is to test the following three hypotheses: that Islam and Muslim identities are perceived as homogeneous; that they are in fact diverse; and that there is a relationship between these two realities. These hypotheses are addressed, theoretically and empirically, in three ways. Firstly, the thesis examines some representations of Islam which exist, in Orientalist discourse, Islamophobia, and the media, and demonstrates that they portray Islam as homogeneous. This is not as simple a proposition as it may appear, because, although Islam is represented as homogeneous, it is represented as homogeneous in different ways, and this diversity is another important theme of this thesis. Secondly, a sociological model of identity, based on an adaptation of some aspects of existentialist thought, is constructed and applied to an empirical examination of the diversity of Muslim identities. Thirdly, this thesis considers

the theoretical and empirical links between representations of Islam and Muslim identities, *inter alia* in the experiences of interviewees, in the emergent critique of Islamophobia, in the tensions between Muslim identities and national identities, and in dialogue between Muslims and Christians.

Another way of explaining the way in which the hypotheses are addressed is to turn them into a series of questions, conceived in terms of a theoretical reflection which was crucial in the way this project was pursued. There are four central questions, which constitute the most important themes of the thesis, and which can be summarised as follows:

- (i) What perceptions exist of a West-Islam dualism, homogeneity of Islam, and homogeneity of the West?
- (ii) How are they expressed?
- (iii) What are their causes and effects?
- (iv) What dissenting voices exist, how are they expressed, and what are their causes and effects?

Section 1.1 identified the significance of the fourth question, and provided some answers, based on an understanding of the hermeneutic circle and negative dialectics, for example, or the difference between the concepts of religion, *a* religion, and a confession. Chapter 2, on the critique of Orientalism, is essentially a discussion of the theoretical reflection which lay behind these questions, and an attempt to provide some answers. As I was reflecting on this subject, and preparing the chapter, it became clear that there was a tension between the affirmation of Muslim identities in the West and an effective critique of Orientalism. This is what these questions attempt to address.

Let us consider the first two questions. Orientalism, as the term is used in this thesis, refers to a body of knowledge or a system of thought which perceives the existence of a West-Islam dualism, in which Islam is perceived as homogeneous. Responses to such stereotypes may imply that the West, not Islam, is homogeneous, but this does not provide an effective critique of the central stereotype, which is that Islam and the West are essentially different. Nevertheless, an effective critique of all these stereotypes involves asking what they are, where they come from, how they are expressed, and why.

In the context of this thesis, the question of identity is central to the third question. A Muslim identity, where it leads to a separatist mentality, can be a cause of the perception that Islam and the West are incompatible, and in this way Muslim identities can be as negative as Western Orientalist stereotypes. Furthermore, the West may be perceived as homogeneous, as being the historical 'Crusader' against Islam, or as being in perpetual darkness, and some of these stereotypes are identified at various points of the thesis, for example in section 2.4. However, my primary concern lies elsewhere. Where Islam and the West are perceived as incompatible in Western or Orientalist discourses, other stereotypes emerge, and this has an effect on the construction of Muslim identities. Muslims may react against the stereotypes, or they may incorporate them into their own identities. This thesis focuses on the diversity of reactions which may emerge.

Because of this diversity, the fourth question is particularly important. While Islam and the West may be perceived as incompatible and/or homogeneous, and this perception is present in the thinking of some Westerners and Muslims, including Western Muslims, there are dissenting voices. In Chapter 4, I show that there is a media critique of Islamophobia, and this is a dissenting voice in the context of the homogenising discourse

about Islam which is predominant in Western media. Also, there are some scholars who insist that Islam is a part of the West (see, for example, Arkoun 1994: 65), or that Islam and the West have shown themselves to be capable of mutual enrichment (for example, Corbin 1986), and this type of thinking has had an influence on many ordinary Muslims, some of whom were interviewed for this thesis (much of this data is presented in chapter 6). Because of these dissenting voices, it is possible to assert that there is a diversity of Muslim identities.

1.4. Structure

Since this thesis considers the dialectical construction of Muslim identities, with reference to Orientalism, and emphasises diversity, decisions about the structure must reflect these themes. To begin with, the thesis considers the interactions between Islam and the West, and the processes by which they constitute each other. Then, as the thesis continues, it places more emphasis on the diversity of Islam and of Muslim identities, showing that this diversity is central to understanding Islam and its interaction with the West, and that it is in part brought about by a negative dialectic. By this I mean that the meeting between Islam and the West creates greater diversity within Islam, as well as within the West, and it can be a factor which increases polarisation.

In order to address the questions and hypotheses which have been outlined, and to make the contributions which are expounded below, the thesis is divided into two main sections. Part I, entitled 'Western representations of Islam', begins, in Chapter 2, with a theoretical and historical view of Orientalism which expounds and addresses the four central questions of the thesis which are outlined above. It uses Edward Said's work as a starting point, then moves beyond Said's framework by taking more account of the

complexity and diversity of Orientalist discourses, and of Muslim discourses about the West. Rather than presenting Islam as a passive victim of Orientalism, I argue for a theory of interaction between Islam and the West, and between Orientalism and Occidentalism (all of which are heterogeneous categories), by which they are influenced and constituted, positively and negatively, through this interaction. This corrects Said's lack of emphasis on the mutual constitution of Islam and the West, and emphasises that they are both *active* participants in a process which creates a polarisation of Islam and the West.

Chapter 3 addresses the third central question of this thesis ('What are their causes and effects?') by isolating an effect of the perception of a West-Islam dualism, homogeneity of Islam and homogeneity of the West, which is referred to as Islamophobia. In order to isolate the specificity of Islamophobia as an effect of these perceptions, I examine its conceptual distinctions and overlaps with racism, consider definitions of both concepts, and propose a possible comparison with antisemitism. Although antisemitism *qua* racism has largely succeeded antisemitism *qua* religious hatred, I suggest that Islamophobia is increasingly articulated in religious terms, but that the category 'Muslim' is still being racialised. Due in part to these observations, and also because many Muslims perceive themselves to be a transnational, multi-ethnic community (*ummah*), I argue that it is necessary to make an analytical distinction between racism and Islamophobia, reflecting a distinction between a racialised *ethnie* and a religious group which may become racialised, but whose alleged differences are not primarily biological or somatic. This chapter also examines allegations of cultural and ideological incompatibility between Western values and those of Islam, which sometimes combine differential racist and Islamophobic discourses, to the extent that these discourses are barely distinguishable.

Chapter 4, on media representations of Islam, addresses empirically the question of how Muslims are perceived and represented in the West. This is addressed with reference to the media because of its accessibility, because it is particularly influential, and because it occupies a 'middle ground' between popular, 'commonsense' ideas, and political or academic discourses. This chapter focuses on the movement which there has been, in Orientalist discourse in general, from a perception of Islam as exotic to one of Islam as fanatical. It shows that there are different perceptions of a West-Islam dualism and homogeneity of Islam, and that these perceptions are expressed in these different ways. It thus addresses the first and second central questions of this thesis ('What perceptions exist of a West-Islam dualism, homogeneity of Islam, and homogeneity of the West?'; and: 'How are they expressed?'). Examples of these discourses are identified, leading to a consideration of discourses about terrorism and delinquency. This is followed by a brief consideration of the possibility that a new critique of Islamophobia is emerging as an alternative, albeit marginal, media discourse, which, as I have stated, is a dissenting voice in terms of the fourth central question ('What dissenting voices exist, how are they expressed, and what are their causes and effects?'). The diverse representations of Islam which are identified in this chapter demonstrate a point which has already been made, that, although Islam is represented as homogeneous, it is represented as homogeneous in different ways, and this adds a further level of complexity to this thesis.

Chapter 5, which opens Part II (entitled Muslim identities in the United Kingdom and France), looks at the idea of identity in general, and Muslim identities in particular, and asks to what extent this enables us to address the tension which exists between the critique of Orientalism and the affirmation of Muslim identities. It begins with Aziz Al-Azmeh's (1996) critique of the notion of Muslim identities, made on the basis that

identity implies a homogeneous, *a priori* social essence. I argue against Al-Azmeh on this point, without denying that identity is a theme which requires careful reflection. Nevertheless, an investigation of Muslim identities can proceed if it takes account of the need for a critique of Orientalism, and a sociological analysis must proceed on the basis (in Sartrean terms) of the existence of Muslims preceding the essence of Islam or of Muslim identities. Following on from these principles, this chapter examines some philosophical and psychological concepts of identity, considers national identities as a 'prototype' for other group identities, particularly the Muslim identity which is expressed in the concept of the *ummah*, and compares some contemporary themes, such as the fluidity of identities, with Sartre's existentialism. It ends with a summary of preliminary answers to all four of the central questions, and argues that we can understand them in a more concrete way when we look at empirical case studies.

This empirical data is presented in Chapter 6, which is an attempt to capture and portray the diversity of Muslim identities. It looks at the diverse ways in which Islam is perceived by Muslims, or what it means to them to be Muslims, the diverse *sources* of Muslim identities which, perhaps inevitably, bring about this diversity, and the combination of Muslim identities with other identities. Because different identities are internalised in individuals, they cannot be neatly separated, and so they affect each other strongly, even to the point of constituting each other. Also, because there is such a diversity of identities on offer, their combination with Muslim identities is another important factor in the creation of a diversity of Muslim identities.

Chapters 7, 8 and 9 form a distinct entity within Part II, because they all look at arenas in which Islam and the West meet and confront each other, so to speak. Conceptually, these chapters all follow on from Chapter 6, rather than progressing in a linear order—ideally, it would be possible to insert these three chapters at the same point

in the thesis. Chapter 7 addresses the subject of national identities, looks at their interaction and tension with Islam and Muslim identities, and considers one of the major differences between the United Kingdom and France, which is the political *model*, or *philosophy*, of integration (as mentioned in section 1.2, where I outlined the rationales for the British-French comparison). I am critical of integration as a concept, for reasons which are outlined, but it still has political weight, and is understood differently in both countries. The United Kingdom has proceeded on the basis of a theory of multiculturalism, underpinned by a discourse of race relations, and France has proceeded on the basis of a theory of *assimilation*, underpinned by a discourse of *intégration*. In part, this is because the United Kingdom has known a *de facto* multiculturalism for centuries, due to its model of the nation state, compared with France's attempt to impose uniformity for the purposes of post-1789 nation building. However, this chapter argues that the *practice* of the politics of integration is broadly similar, and that there is diversity within each country, as some of my interview material demonstrates. It demonstrates that the phenomena of national identities and the politics of integration play a very important part in the construction of Muslim identities in the West, because they constitute an arena in which Islam and the West can meet and, so to speak, confront each other.

Chapter 8 continues the discussion of representations of Islam in the educational sphere, which begins in Chapter 4, and compares the issues in question in the United Kingdom and France. As such, it focuses on a specific example of the diversity and complexity entailed in an apparent area of confrontation between Islam and the West. In the United Kingdom, there have been debates and disagreements on the subjects of state-funded Muslim schools, religious education for Muslim pupils, mixed classes for physical education and sport, the content of the sex education curriculum, and the provision of

halal food in school canteens. In France, on the other hand, one issue has predominated, and that is the debate about the wearing of the *hijab* in state schools. This debate has been premised on the *hijab* having a single meaning, with an assumption of a simple conflict between the French secular republic and the values of Islam. In contrast, this chapter highlights some complexities. It shows that opposition to the *hijab* can be associated with xenophobia and exclusion, while, on the other hand, the Qur'anic injunction on women to veil themselves does not necessarily have to be taken literally. Furthermore, some Muslim women and schoolgirls see the *hijab* as liberating and affirmative of their identity, while dissenting voices exist (in answer to the fourth central question), leading others to refuse to wear the *hijab*, or to wear it reluctantly.

Chapter 9, which is the final chapter of Part II, and which precedes the conclusion, is about Muslim-Christian relations. This chapter takes account of the radical antipathy between Islam and the West which, since the eleventh century, has often existed between the religiously defined Muslim world and the Christian West. It examines dialogue between Muslims and Christians in the United Kingdom and France, using ethnographic and interview material to show what such dialogue means to participants, looking at the theological basis for dialogue, and considering its sociological significance. It argues that the existence of such dialogue demonstrates the existence of a certain social *ambience*. This in turn demonstrates that relations between Islam and the West have changed radically from the days of radical mutual antipathy, and this undermines the Orientalist perception of Islam as homogeneous, unchanging, and essentially different from the West. Dialogue can itself be a dissenting voice.

1.5. Methodology

The research methodology which was used to prepare this thesis is most simply described as comparative participant observation, including interviews and the analysis of newspaper sources. The British-French comparative aspect is discussed below. First, I wish to discuss the use of participant observation, interviews and content analysis. Participant observation, or ethnography, is defined by Hammersley and Atkinson (1983: 2) as follows:

The ethnographer participates, overtly or covertly, in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions; in fact collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues with which he or she is concerned.

The social sciences have frequently been plagued by a kind of open warfare between advocates of participant observation and other qualitative methods, and advocates of quantitative method. This may not be the case any more, and it may even be possible to deconstruct the gap between these different methods, as Hammersley (1992: 1, 159ff) has suggested. Nevertheless, claims are still made about the distinct advantages and disadvantages of participant observation. For example, participant observation enables the researcher to pursue questions in greater depth than other methodologies, develop a *Verstehen* or empathy with the subjects, make use of actors' subjective understandings, prioritise the *understanding* of social action and interaction over the *explanation* of social facts, and take account of the distinctiveness of the social world *vis-à-vis* the natural world. On the other hand, it is believed that there are problems with the

generalisability of ethnographic accounts, that this undermines the validity of their findings, that there is a temptation to assume that researchers' preconceived understandings do not influence their results (though postmodern approaches to anthropology have compelled researchers to be aware of this), and that the relationship to practice is at best tenuous (see Hammersley 1992: 2; compare Bulmer 1984: 210-11).

I do not believe strongly that only one methodology is inherently superior to any other, and the reason for using participant observation in this study is that it was the most appropriate method to answer the questions and test the hypotheses which are discussed above, in section 1.3. It entailed meeting Muslims in different areas of their social lives, speaking to them in an everyday context which avoided the formality of the interview (though, in some cases, I used more formal semi-structured interviews), finding out where they lived and what they did, and collecting a wide variety of different types of information. The Muslims who I was able to meet had a wide diversity of attitudes to their faith and to the societies in which they lived, which is why the participant observation method was an important means of addressing the questions and hypotheses about diversity.

An example of this can be taken from the earliest participant observation which I carried out for this thesis. In Glasgow, where my United Kingdom fieldwork was concentrated (I explain why below), I began attending an English-speaking Muslim study group (the Halaqah circle) in November 1995. Participants were all male, but there was an enormous diversity of occupations (including a surgeon, a university lecturer, an engineer, a shopkeeper, an artist, an architect and a community worker), ages (from primary-school age to retired), and countries of origin (including Pakistan, India, Egypt, Mauritius, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, France, the United Kingdom, and even Poland). The Halaqah circle met most Friday evenings, and would read a section of the Qur'an,

followed by *tafseer* (an exposition of the text by one participant) and discussion. Sometimes it would be interrupted for the *maghrib* (evening) or *'isha* (night) prayer, and there were usually some refreshments, which provided a good opportunity for informal discussion.

I carried out participant observation in many other places, including the Glasgow Central Mosque, an inter-religious group in Glasgow, the Regents Park Mosque and Haqqani Sufi priory in London, and districts of Glasgow, London and Bradford where a significant number of Muslims live. In the Woodlands district of Glasgow, I mapped the locations of mosques, *halal* butchers, other Muslim-owned businesses, and what I referred to as the 'Muslim culture industry', that is, businesses which provide cultural products associated with mainly Muslim countries, for example Pakistani food, to the 'non-Muslim' as well as Muslim population. This is discussed in section 6.4 of the thesis. In France, I began my participant observation in the district of Wazemmes, where I was living, and carried out the same type of 'mapping' study. I also had a contact from a Muslim-Christian group (*Groupe Islamo-Chrétien du Hautmont-Mouviaux*), who put me in touch with a number of mosques and individuals who I was able to meet, and, in some cases, interview. The *Groupe Islamo-Chrétien* was itself an important source of ethnographic data, as it met regularly. I attended a number of mosques in the Lille area, particularly the Lille Sud mosque, and also in Paris. I visited North African tea rooms, an outdoor market, Islamic bookshops, and the *banlieues* (peripheral urban housing estates) where a large number of Muslims in France are concentrated. This range of focal points for participant observation was an appropriate method to capture the diversity of Islam and Muslim identities in the United Kingdom and France, thus addressing the questions and hypotheses which were developed.

The use of interviews was part of my participant observation. Initially, I had intended to use interviews as the basis for the methodology, but this gave way to a use of interviews in the context of participant observation. Part of the reason for this is that it was often difficult to persuade people to agree to be interviewed. Only a few refused, but others kept asking me to call back later, or failed to arrive at the agreed time. Most problematically, the people who were eventually interviewed *tended* to fit a particular profile. They were male, practising Muslims, who articulated a belief that Muslims had a responsibility to 'integrate' more effectively in Western society (whether as an end in itself or for the purpose of *dawa*, 'invitation' to Islam), a belief which, for various reasons, is not universally shared. This would have left me with a severe validity problem. On the other hand, the fact that this correlation occurred was in itself a significant finding, and is referred to in section 6.2 of the thesis.

Interviews were often taped and transcribed, but not always. In some cases, this depended on the interviewee's consent, which was sometimes withheld, and in other cases it was my judgement that taping the interview would affect its quality by significantly restricting the openness of the subject. Furthermore, I was sometimes able to speak to the same people informally, either before or after having interviewed them, and I felt that the most interesting data came from these informal conversations. This also shows that the interviews were becoming a part of the participant observation, and that it was appropriate to view them as such. So, as the research progressed, there was a movement from formal, taped, transcribed interviews, to untaped interviews, or lengthy informal conversations. In all, there were 59 such subjects, 30 in France (listed in Table 1.1) and 29 in the United Kingdom (listed in Table 1.2). Of these, 16 agreed to a taped interview (11 in France, 5 in the United Kingdom), 13 to an untaped interview (9 in France, 4 in the United Kingdom), there were 26 people with whom I only had informal

conversations (8 in France, 18 in the United Kingdom), there was one formal audience, with Sheikh Nazim in London, and there are three subjects who are cited, but who only participated in a group discussion. The above figures reflect the fact that most of the French fieldwork was carried out before most of the United Kingdom fieldwork. There are three other things which should be noted: firstly, I have not cited every informal conversation which I had between 1995 and 1999; secondly, there were some people with whom I had more than one in-depth conversation, including some who also agreed to an interview; and thirdly, the distinction between untaped interviews and significant informal conversations can be quite fluid. On this basis, we could say that there were 39 untaped interviews/informal conversations, of which 17 were in France and 22 in the United Kingdom.

I would not wish this discussion of methodology, particularly when it relates to interactions with real people, to be too abstract. It would be desirable to give more biographical information about subjects than is given in Tables 1.1 and 1.2. However, some were clearly reluctant to give biographical information, and many subjects, particularly those who agreed to a formal interview, were given guarantees of confidentiality. It would be unethical to break these guarantees, which is why I have given respondents pseudonyms (with the exception of a few who are in prominent positions, or whose views are a matter of public record). However, it is possible to concretise this discussion, and bring some characters more to life (so to speak), by providing some examples from my participant observation. In Appendix 3, I cite some fieldwork notes from the Halaqah circle in Glasgow and the *Groupe Islamo-Chrétien* near Lille, which show how people interacted with each other, how their backgrounds and attitudes influenced those interactions, and how the diversity of Islam and Muslim

1. Abdallah, law student, president of JMF Tourcoing, born in France, of Algerian origin, lives in Tourcoing, male (taped interview).
2. Abdul, bookshop owner in Vicux Lille, male (Librairie Orientale) (informal conversations).
3. Ahmed, doctoral student, born in Morocco, oriented towards Sufi Islam, male (taped interview and informal conversation).
4. Aïsha, works for association concerned with integration issues, President of Association Bammate, born in Algeria, lives in Roubaix, female (taped interview and informal conversations).
5. Alain, social worker, 'français de souche', Baptist, involved in Muslim-Christian dialogue, male (untaped interview and informal conversations).
6. Amar Lasfar*, rector of Lille Sud mosque, president of Ligue Islamique du Nord and former member of CORIF, born in Morocco, now French citizen, male (taped interview and informal conversation).
7. Amina, works for Espace Intégration, female (taped interview).
8. Amo Ferhati*, director of Espace Intégration, born in France, of Moroccan origin, 'non-practising', male (two taped interviews).
9. Bruno, Catholic priest, 'français de souche', male (informal conversations).
10. Charlotte, English language assistant, born in Britain, living in Villeneuve d'Ascq, Anglican, female (informal conversations).
11. Edgar, Catholic priest, 'français de souche', male (untaped interview and informal conversations).
12. Farid, Amar Lasfar's secretary, born in Morocco, in Lille for 15 years, male (informal conversations).
13. Fatima, nurse, born in France, of Algerian origin, lives in Moulins district of Lille, 'non-practising', female (two untaped interviews).
14. Gilles, residential social worker (éducateur spécialisé), 'français de souche', Catholic, male (informal conversations).
15. Guy Lepoutre*, Catholic priest, 'français de souche', lives in Mouvaux, male (untaped interview and informal conversations).
16. Hassan, science teacher, born in Algeria, lives in Villeneuve d'Ascq, vice-president of Ligue Islamique du Nord, male (taped interview).
17. Henri, works in clothes shop, French convert to Islam, male (untaped interview).
18. Ibrahim, teacher in mosque, born in France, of Algerian origin, lives in Fives district of Lille, member of Naqshbandi Sufi order, male (two taped interviews).
19. Ismael, tea room proprietor, born in Morocco, lives in Fives, male (untaped interview).
20. Jacques, Catholic priest, 'français de souche', male (untaped interview).
21. Jean, unemployed, born in Morocco, has taken French name, lives in Lille Sud district, 'non-practising', male (two taped interviews).
22. Kahina, student, born in France, of Kabyle origin, lives in Roubaix, has also lived in Glasgow, 'non-practising', female (informal conversations).
23. Karim, male (participant in Groupe Islamo-Chrétien discussion).
24. Leïla, nurse, born in Algeria, of Kabyle origin, regards herself as non-practising, female (taped interview and informal conversations).
25. Naïm, social worker, born in France, of Algerian origin, lives in Roubaix, 'non-practising', male (untaped interview).
26. Pierre, involved with Médi@tions, French convert to Islam, lives in Dunkerque, male (informal conversation).
27. Rachid, student, born in France, lives in Mons-en-Barœul, has also lived in Glasgow, male (untaped interview and informal conversations).
28. Saïd, Imam, also studying sciences religieuses at university in Lille, born in Algeria, male (taped interview).
29. Sophie, 'française de souche', Catholic, married to Muslim (Ahmed), female (informal conversations).
30. Zaynab, female (participant in Groupe Islamo-Chrétien discussion).

Table 1.1: respondents in France (NB all names are pseudonyms, *except* for those asterisked)

1. Abbas, Ph.D. student, born in Iraq, living in Glasgow, male (taped interview).
2. Abdulmalik, English, has taken Muslim name, lives in London, member of Naqshbandi Sufi order, father of Omar, male (informal conversation).
3. Abdulrahman, works for the Ethnic Minorities Enterprise Centre in Glasgow, born in Scotland, of Pakistani origin, lives in Glasgow, male (taped interview).
4. Akbar, Imam, born in Egypt, lives in Cumbernauld, male (informal conversations).
5. Ali, university lecturer, leading figure within Glasgow's Muslim community, born in Egypt, lives in East Kilbride, male (informal conversations).
6. Alija, Bosnian refugee in Glasgow, male (participant in group discussion)
7. Andrew, works for Parks Department of Glasgow City Council, Scottish convert to Islam, lives in Glasgow, male (informal conversation)
8. Asif, medical student, born in Scotland, of Pakistani origin, lives in Glasgow, male (informal conversations)
9. Aziz, surgeon, born in Egypt, married to Irish woman (who has converted to Islam), lives in Dumfries, male (informal conversations)
10. Daoud, Ph.D. student, born in Egypt, living in Glasgow, male (taped interview and informal conversations).
11. Edward, retired, Scottish convert to Islam, lives in Glasgow, male (informal conversations)
12. Farida, Ph.D. student, born in Turkey, living in Glasgow, female (taped interview and informal conversations).
13. Fouad, architect, born in Egypt, lives in Glasgow, male (informal conversations and participant in group discussions).
14. Hussein, Greek, has taken Muslim name, lives in London, member of Naqshbandi Sufi order, male (informal conversation).
15. Malik, mechanic, born in Scotland, of Pakistani origin, lives in Glasgow, male (informal conversations)
16. Michael, Catholic priest, born in Scotland, lived in England for 30-40 years, lives in Glasgow, male (untaped interview).
17. Mustapha, engineer, born in Mauritius, living in Glasgow, male (untaped interview and informal conversations).
18. Naima, works in a counselling centre for black and ethnic minority women, Ismaili Muslim, has taught Islamic and Ismaili studies, lives in Edinburgh, female (untaped interview).
19. Omar, English, has taken Muslim name, lives in London, member of Naqshbandi Sufi order, male (informal conversation).
20. Patricia, curator of Islamic Art at the Burrell Collection in Glasgow, German, married to 'an Arab', religious affiliation unknown, lives in Glasgow, female (untaped interview).
21. Peter, architect, of Irish/Kashmiri origin, Christian, male (informal conversations)
22. Philip, Scottish convert to Islam, participant in inter-religious dialogue, male (informal conversations)
23. Robert, director of the Inter-Faith Network for the United Kingdom, English, lives in London, Anglican, male (taped interview).
24. Selwyn, artist by training, works in electrical shop, Scottish convert to Islam, lives in Glasgow, male (informal conversations)
25. Sharif, born in Scotland, of Pakistani origin, male (informal conversations)
26. Sheikh Nazim*, Sheikh of one branch of the Naqshbandi Sufi order, lives in Turkish Cyprus, male (formal audience)
27. Tariq, administrator in voluntary sector, born in Egypt, lives in Glasgow, male (informal conversations)
28. Wasim, retired, born in India (before independence), lives in Glasgow, male (informal conversations)
29. Yusuf, born in Pakistan, lives in Glasgow, male (informal conversations)

Table 1.2: respondents in the United Kingdom
(NB all names are pseudonyms, *except* for the one asterisked)

identities became tangible in individuals and in group interactions. They also show that the fieldwork process enabled my own understanding to develop.

There is another side to the methodology which is concerned with understanding ideas and stereotypes rather than people. I refer mainly to the analysis of newspaper articles, which I also call content analysis. I gathered approximately four thousand articles (many available on CD-ROM) from a variety of newspapers, including *The Guardian*, *The Times*, *The Independent*, *The Independent on Sunday*, the *Glasgow Herald*, *Le Monde*, *Libération*, *France-Soir*, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, *La Voix du Nord*, *Nord-Matin* and *Nord-Eclair*. I did not use tabloids, for reasons which are outlined at the beginning of Chapter 4. Although content analysis often refers to a quantitative or quasi-quantitative approach to the text, the purpose of using content analysis in this thesis is to demonstrate that there is a diversity of written representations of Islam, but that Islam and Muslim identities are generally represented as homogenous. For these purposes, a qualitative content analysis is more appropriate. Such an approach seeks to gather evidence of diversity by citing different examples of discourses about Islam, so it is only those articles which are useful for the identification of a distinctive stereotype are cited in this thesis, mainly in Chapters 3 and 4, and this is a small fraction of the total gathered. The question of whether one discourse is *quantitatively* dominant is not particularly important in this context, though I do surmise that some discourses are more important than others, and that their relative importance changes over time.

The final point I wish to make about the methodology of this thesis, and possibly the most important, is that it is comparative. The comparison has been between the United Kingdom and France, for reasons which have already been outlined, and, more specifically, between Glasgow and Lille. There are a number of reasons why Glasgow and Lille were chosen. Firstly, both cities were practically amenable, since I live in

Glasgow and had contacts in Lille before beginning this thesis. Secondly, Glasgow and Lille have a great deal in common. I had already noticed that they had a similar 'feel', and, more objectively, they are both regional capitals with a distinctive culture in the context of the nation states in which they are situated. Glasgow is the largest city in Scotland, which has a distinctive identity and status within the United Kingdom, while Lille is the capital of the Nord—Pas-de-Calais region, and has a distinctive Flemish culture. Also, they have a common tradition of working-class left-wing politics, and their recent economic history has been remarkably similar (having been dominated by heavy industry and textiles, which have declined, there has been high unemployment and attempts at 'urban regeneration').

The third reason for comparing Glasgow and Lille is that their Muslim populations are typical of the United Kingdom and France respectively. By that I mean that there are between one million and 1.5 million Muslims in the United Kingdom, about two per cent of the total population, of whom approximately 20,000 live in Glasgow, which is between two and three per cent of the city's population. In France, there are probably between three million and five million Muslims, which constitutes between five and eight per cent of the population, which is similar to the Muslim percentage of Lille's population.³

There is one theoretical problem which emerges here. In fact, there are a number of problems with comparative methodology, such as 'the non-equivalence of concepts', the issue of validation, and 'a world which has grown into an interdependent and interlinked

³ It is difficult to be sure about the statistics pertaining to the United Kingdom and France. United Kingdom estimates range from about 700,000 to over two million, while French estimates range from under three million to over five million. However, where one set of figures is given at any one time, it is often for a specific reason, whether to marginalise the significance of Islam, to argue that Muslims should be listened to more than they are, or to claim that there is a threat of 'Islamic invasion'. As a result, it is probably wise to assume that the real figure is somewhere in the middle, i.e., about 1.3 million in the United Kingdom and four million in France. For a discussion of this subject in the United Kingdom, see Anwar (1993).

global system' (Øyen 1990: 5, 12). My main concern is with the latter, and the issue of whether or not there is a dependency or interdependency between Orientalist discourses in the United Kingdom and in France, or between Muslim identities in these countries. If so, according to Galton's theorem, the quasi-scientific logic of strict comparison cannot apply (Bertaux 1990: 154). Erwin Scheuch explains that: "Galton's problem" is the issue whether a given culture can be thought of as "causing" something, or whether the something is instead the result of diffusion across cultures' (Scheuch 1990: 28). According to this logic, my study is not strictly comparative, because the United Kingdom and France do influence each other in their attitudes towards Islam, and the construction of Muslim identities is a process which takes place across national boundaries.

On a practical level, however, this thesis does make comparisons between the United Kingdom and France, with a view to distinguishing universal and particular features of Western representations of Islam and the diversity of Muslim identities, and also with a view to identifying similarities and differences within each country. These similarities and differences are influenced by cross-cultural diffusion, so it is appropriate to describe this thesis as a direct comparison, even if it stretches the boundaries set by Galton's theorem. Indeed, that is one of the contributions which this thesis makes, and I discuss this and the other contributions now.

1.6. Contributions

This thesis makes a contribution to the critique of Orientalism, through a theoretical analysis and empirical observation of the construction of Muslim identities in the United Kingdom and France. As this introduction has made clear, the thesis examines Western

stereotypes of Islam, particularly of Muslims living in the West, and ways in which Muslims in the West have responded to these stereotypes by constructing their own Muslim identities. The central contribution of the thesis lies in joining these issues, establishing a dialectic of Orientalism and Muslim identities. It focuses on the stereotype of Islam as homogeneous, the sociological reality that Islam and Muslim identities are diverse, and posits the same dialectical relationship between these phenomena. Systematically, the thesis makes the following nine contributions to academic knowledge, the first five of which are made by the thesis as a whole, while the final four are made by its constituent parts:

- (i) It analyses the dialectical relationship between Orientalism and Muslim identities.
- (ii) It identifies some important principles for a critique of Orientalism.
- (iii) It furthers our understanding of the diversity of Islam.
- (iv) It analyses the relationship between this diversity and the Orientalist stereotype of homogeneity.
- (v) It does so in the context of a direct British-French comparison.
- (vi) It provides an analysis of Islamophobia, and an evaluation of an emergent critique of Islamophobia.
- (vii) It furthers our understanding of the social significance of Muslim-Christian dialogue, and its significance to the construction of Muslim identities.
- (viii) It provides some critical reflections on current debates about 'integration', 'assimilation' and 'multiculturalism'.
- (ix) It presents original empirical data.

There are two important points, which I wish to discuss now, which demonstrate the importance of these contributions. The first is that it is necessary to understand the diversity of Islam and the relevance of Muslim identities in order to understand contemporary Islam from a sociological perspective, and this in turn is necessary if we are to appreciate the full significance of Islam in the modern world, and indeed the modern world itself. This is because a sociological framework cannot be based on a putative *a priori* Islamic essence which enables us to understand the diversity of Muslim experiences and identities. Rather, within a sociological framework, it is necessary to address the diversity of Muslim experiences and identities before we can ask what is Islam, and how does Islam relate to the modern world. This thesis, through the contributions it makes, identifies one approach by which this can be achieved.

The second point which demonstrates the importance of these contributions is that the thesis identifies principles for a critique of Orientalism which does not reduce Islam to the role of passive victim. As I argue in the literature review (section 1.7, below) and in Chapter 2, much critical work about Orientalism and Western stereotypes of Islam, including some of Edward Said's work, has regarded the West as the source of active construction of these stereotypes, and Muslims as the passive recipients, or victims. This is profoundly unhelpful, because it neglects the active role of Muslims in the construction of their own identities. This thesis is a contribution to correcting this approach, and it does so through a theory of interaction between Islam and the West, and between their stereotypes of each other, by which they influence, and indeed constitute, each other.

The substance of the above contributions has already been raised in this introduction, whether in the discussion of the central questions and hypotheses, in the methodology, or in the outlining of the structure. For example, the third and fourth of the above contributions are reflected in the hypotheses that Islam is perceived as

homogeneous, that it is in fact diverse, and that there is a relationship between the homogeneous perception and the diverse reality. The fifth and ninth contributions are reflected in the methodology section, where I insisted on the value of a direct comparison between the United Kingdom and France, and discussed the ways in which I gathered original empirical data, and why. The others are all discussed in section 1.4, where I look at the structure of the thesis. However, to really understand why these are distinctive contributions to academic knowledge, it is necessary to look at the already existing literature, assess some of its strengths and weaknesses, and show that there is a gap which is filled by this thesis.

1.7. Review of literature

Firstly, I make some comments about the contextual literature. Having done so, I discuss the literature which is relevant to the above contributions, discussing them in the same order in which the contributions are listed. This thesis is situated at a point of overlap between the sociology of religion and the sociology of migration. These two sub-disciplines come together in a number of ways, as do religion and migration themselves. There is a consciousness which is frequently found in religion, that the religious life is a kind of spiritual journey, that our true home is elsewhere, and that we are 'pilgrims' and 'migrants' on earth. More concretely, numerous religions have spread, or experienced a shift in their centre of gravity, because of migration. In the case of Islam, this began with the migration (*hijra*) from Mecca (*Makkah*) to Medina (*Madinah*), from which the Islamic calendar is dated (24 September 622), and later migrations from the Arabian peninsula.

The sociology of religion is perhaps the oldest sub-discipline within sociology, and was a central concern of Weber (1930, 1993) and Durkheim (1915, 1970). However, the sociology of religion does not appear to have progressed as much as other areas of sociology, something which is common to the study of religion in other social sciences. This view is corroborated by Clifford Geertz (1993: 170), writing about the anthropology of religion, who suggests that the problem is a lack of acknowledgement of religious change, and by John Milbank (1990: 140), who suggests that the sociology of religion is a fundamentally flawed project because of 'the specifically modern confinement and protection of "the religious sphere"' and 'the peculiarity and specificity of religious practice and logic'. Milbank may be right, but I think he is overstating the case. It is my belief that the sociology of religion needs to be combined with other disciplinary approaches to religion, and other areas of sociology. For example, it can be combined with the anthropology of religion, theology and religious studies, the sociology of knowledge, social movements, or migration. Furthermore, it is essential that the 'objective' or 'scientific' approach should take account of perspectives which recognise the subjective realities of religion. The approach of this thesis has been to combine the sociology of religion with the sociology of migration, while drawing on anthropological approaches to the study of religion, and works of theology and religious studies which highlight the diversity of Islam.

The sociology of migration is an area in which one's own approach and perspective is betrayed by naming it the sociology of migration. Others would write about 'race relations', 'integration' or 'ethnicity', for example, and these approaches are often of value. Yet, when I situate my writing within the sociology of migration, I imply an emphasis on the phenomena of migration and racism, and a critical attitude to emphases on 'race relations' or 'integration'. It is undoubtedly due to the influence of Robert

Miles (for example 1987, 1989, 1993) that I have taken this approach, and that I have recognised the importance of certain conceptual frameworks, particularly of a 'world system' which affects and effects economic, political and ideological patterns of domination. In addition, and perhaps more significantly, the analysis in this thesis has been carried out, at least in part, in terms of a dialectic of Orientalism and Muslim identities, and this mirrors some aspects of Miles's implicit dialectic of racism and migration (see especially Miles 1993: 111-18). Similarly, I agree with the emphasis on the phenomena of migration and racism, to the extent that I reject the integration problematic (the question of how best to accomplish the 'integration' of 'immigrants' or 'ethnic minorities' into Western societies).

On the other hand, my approach to the study of racism would emphasise its diversity, and, by extension of this approach, I emphasise the diversity of Orientalist representations of Islam. Writers such as Robert Miles and Michel Wieviorka place a legitimate emphasis on the unity of racism (Miles 1989: 41-68, 77-84; Wieviorka 1995: 119-23), which does not of course mean that they deny its diversity (see, for example, Miles 1993: 12-13, 149; Wieviorka 1995: 36-7). On this issue, I have been more drawn to Taguieff's approach, which makes a distinction between ideal types such as *racisme inégalitaire* and *racisme différentialiste*, and, perhaps more pertinently, between a *racisme hétérophobe* and a *racisme hétérophile* (Taguieff 1987: 14-15, 163ff, 409-10 *et passim*). The latter distinction is reflected in some critiques of Orientalism, and can be encapsulated in Aziz Al-Azmeh's (1996: 28) argument which holds that Western discourses about 'the Orient' or 'Islam', be they xenophobic or xenophile, are part of 'an objective complicity between exoticism and the rhetoric of identity and authenticity'.

In the context of a literature review, this enables us to begin expounding the first contribution, that the thesis analyses the dialectical relationship between Orientalism and

Muslim identities. The above discussion of Miles and Taguieff demonstrates that there is an 'elective affinity' between concepts in the sociology of migration and the dialectical relationship between Orientalism and Muslim identities which is discussed in this thesis. However, Al-Azmeh seems to argue that the critique of Orientalism, which I discuss below and in Chapter 2, necessitates a rejection of the language of identity. This thesis shows that the critique of Orientalism cannot take place without a recognition and valorisation of Muslim identities, and so it does fill a gap which is left by Al-Azmeh.

Other works which deal with Muslim identities are very relevant background material to this thesis, but there is still a gap, insofar as they do not engage in a critique of Orientalism, nor do they seriously consider the extent to which identity is constructed from outside, by which I mean that one's own identity is influenced by other people's perceptions of oneself. I wish to discuss four such works, all of which are doctoral theses which make their own contributions. More general works on the subject of identity are discussed in Chapter 5.

Firstly, Claudine Younes-Matton's psychology thesis examines the connection between the concept of identity and the question of whether or not, or to what extent, Algerian migrants to France have a 'project' to return to Algeria. Her methodology consists of semi-directive interviews, an adaptation of the TST (Twenty Statements Test, which is considered in the chapter on identity), the IMIS (*Investigateur Multistade de l'Identité Sociale*) test, and questionnaires. She looks at some theories of identity as applied to Islam, and recognises that identity can be influenced by other people, and indeed that identity cannot be 'actualised' (*s'actualiser*) without other people. However, identity is conceived as coming from 'within' the individual, who then seeks the social recognition of that identity, though the Other may also constitute a threat to one's identity (Younes-Matton 1987: 13, 16, 49). There is no consideration of how one's own

identity in the eyes of the Other might be internalised, an issue which is addressed in this thesis. She then considers the 'first generation' and 'second generation' of 'Algerians' in France, and concludes that the main issue facing the 'first generation' has been the wish to return, though they eventually adjust to a '*provisoire durable*', but that the 'second generation' have a more complex identity, dependent on nationality, which can complicate their parents' intention to return (Younes-Matton 1987: 168, 179).

Louis Pita's thesis, on the other hand, emphasises the spiritual and social dimensions of Muslim identity, which emerge in answer to the questions of how to be a Muslim in a 'non-Muslim' country which is influenced by Christianity, and what a Muslim can do in a 'non-Muslim' country to preserve his or her identity. The spiritual dimension, defined with reference to the *shahada*, is summarised as witness, contemplation, and (symbolic) martyrdom, because it implies a total commitment to Islam and being one of the *ummah* (Pita 1988: 35). The social dimension implies 'studying the historical and social structures of the various components of the Islamic community' (Pita 1988: abstract in English), rather than the surrounding society, which is emphasised in my thesis.

A third approach is taken by Mounia Bennani-Chraïbi, whose thesis argues that young Moroccans view the West in a manner which combines fascination and demonisation (*diabolisation*). Fascination centres around the *exoticism* of the West—its cold climate, snow, beauty of certain regions, monuments, architecture and '*distractions*' in Spain or Las Vegas—and Western consumption, particularly the belief that it is possible to find anything. An example of demonisation is Western films about sex, which is contrasted with the allegedly 'Islamic' notion of *purdah* (Bennani-Chraïbi 1993: 110, 118). Bennani-Chraïbi's thesis is particularly original and interesting because it considers 'the reverse side of the question of Orientalism and Muslim identities, by looking at how people from a predominantly Muslim country view the West, and it is important to note

that this contributes to the construction of those young Moroccans' identities. However, my thesis focuses on the mutual construction of Muslim and Western identities, recognising that Islam and the West are constitutive of each other, that Muslim perceptions of the West have an influence on the perceived essence of *Western* identities, and *vice versa*.

Fourthly, some of my thinking in Chapter 6 of this thesis, about the diversity of Muslim identities, was inspired by Sophie Gilliat's (1994: 205-32) catalogue of 'identity-forming institutions' in the United Kingdom. These are referred to as family, mosques, schools and *madrassahs*, youth organisations, language, publishing houses, Muslim media, retail industry, women's groups, ideational institutions, Muslim leadership and institutions, international connections, and the articulation of community demands. This list is valuable because the diversity of such institutions is one reason for the diversity of Muslim identities, a topic to which I return in this literature review, and in Chapter 6. However, a *dialectical* model of the relationship between Muslim identities and Orientalist perspectives demands the recognition of other identity-forming institutions, which are in tension with those identified by Gilliat. These include churches, state schools, the national and local media, political leadership and institutions, and the articulation of *other* communities' demands.

The second contribution which is made by this thesis is that it identifies some important principles for a critique of Orientalism, and in doing so it strengthens the emphasis on the dialectical relationship between Orientalism and Muslim identities. The academic critique of Orientalism is dominated by the figure of Edward Said, even though other contributions show a greater philosophical sophistication. Said has contributed to three main areas of academic thought: the critique of Orientalism (for example Said 1982, 1985, 1993, 1995, 1997b), literary theory (for example Said 1986b, 1994, 1997a)

and the Palestinian question (for example Said 1979, 1986a, 1990, 1992), for which his works have been banned by the Palestinian authorities. His writing, which is always intensely political, has been critical of Western involvement in the Middle East, which he sees as having exacerbated the situation of the Palestinians. He situates this involvement within the context of Western perceptions of the Orient, and of Islam, which he examines in *Orientalism*, as well as *Culture and Imperialism*, and *Covering Islam*. His hypothesis in these three books can be summarised as follows:

... knowledge of Islam and Islamic peoples has generally proceeded not only from dominance and confrontation but also from cultural antipathy. Today Islam is defined negatively as that with which the West is radically at odds, and this tension establishes a framework radically limiting knowledge of Islam (Said 1997b: 163).

In *Orientalism*, Said develops the notion that the Orient is a Western creation against (or in opposition to) which the West has defined itself. He limits his study to what we now call the Middle East and Egypt, and his focus could be conceptualised as a geographical quadrilateral, the boundaries of which run from Cairo to Damascus to Tehran to Mecca. He identifies three types of Orientalism: a popular discourse; an academic discourse, and a system of colonial institutions. What they had in common was that they presented the Orient as fundamentally different from, and inferior to, the West, and regarded the Orient as homogeneous and unchanging. In spite of the stereotype of homogeneity and stasis, this thesis argues that Said points to a paradigm shift from an Orientalism which was based on a sensual stereotype of the Orient, to one based on a stereotype of fanaticism, as evidenced, for example, by discourse on the danger of

Islamic fundamentalism. This thesis makes a contribution by clarifying this paradigm shift, expounding its relevance to contemporary perceptions of Islam, and by breaking away from Said's emphasis on nineteenth-century fictional texts.

Another criticism of Said is that he appears, at times, to confuse the critique of Orientalism with the personal criticism of Orientalist scholars, and it is primarily for this reason that his work lacks the philosophical sophistication which is found, for example, in the work of Aziz Al-Azmeh, who is cited above, and Abdallah Laroui. Laroui (1990) takes a historical look at some philosophical interactions between European and Arabo-Islamic thought, at how the notions of Europe and the Arab world have evolved and been contrasted with each other, and at how this contrast has been supported by Orientalism, within a colonial framework. This is expounded in some depth in the chapter of this thesis on Orientalism, particularly the notion of complementarity, by which Laroui means that Islam and the West have defined themselves in opposition to each other, so that they would increasingly *become* the compliment of each other (that is, each becomes what the other is not). In the literature on the critique of Orientalism, Laroui's concept of complementarity is the closest to my concept of the dialectical relationship between Orientalism and Muslim identities. The main difference is that my thesis operationalises the concept by applying it to the empirical study of Muslims in contemporary Western Europe.

The third contribution, which has already been alluded to in the discussion of Gilliat (1994), is that this thesis furthers our understanding of the diversity of Islam. In 1974, Jacques Berque was able to write:

Nul n'a encore étudié avec la précision désirable la façon dont l'invariance coranique se compose avec les variations de la vie individuelle et collective....⁴

Sujet vierge, en vérité! (cited in Ferchou, ed., 1996: back cover)

A quarter of a century later, it seems to me, this subject is at the centre of studies of Islam, and is rapidly growing. The collection edited by Ferchou (1996) attempts to fill the gap identified by Berque, and does so with reference to North Africa. It identifies a range of different ways in which Islam is diverse—in terms of its epistemological system, political reference, cultural code, theology, ritual practices, and attitudes to the popular cult of saints—an awareness which underpins this thesis. The study of the diversity of Islam in the West has tended to focus on the diversity of Islamic institutions, or schools of thought, and has not yet given full recognition to the 'diversity of diversity' which is emphasised in Ferchou's collection, or to the ways in which Islam becomes diverse within a wider social context. However, it is my impression that this is being corrected by current work in progress (only time can corroborate this impression), and by recent work on conversion to Islam (see, for example, Köse 1996; Bourque 1998; and, less recently, Telhine 1991).

That is not to say that works on the diversity of Islamic institutions and schools of thought are worthless. Indeed, such works (for example Robinson 1988; Andrews 1993a, 1993b; King 1994; Geaves 1996) have been particularly important in the preparation of this thesis, and have demonstrably illuminated a highly significant and influential phenomenon. In view of current political concerns about Islam, Etienne's (1987: 218-19) typology of different 'Islamist' groups and associations is salutary. Firstly, he identifies the classic groups (*groupes ou associations de maintenance*

⁴ 'Nobody has yet studied, with the precision which might be desired, the way in which Qur'anic invariability comes to terms with the variations of individual and collective life.... Truly a virgin subject!'

classique), such as the Muslim Brotherhood, which are primarily concerned with people's souls, guarding the faith, and gathering the faithful for prayer and worship. Secondly, there are a number of conversionist groups (*associations conversionnistes*) whose effort is directed principally at lukewarm Muslims. These are exemplified by the worldwide *Tablighi Jama'at*, which originated in the sub-continent, and the Tunisian-based MTI (*Mouvement de la Tendance Islamique*).⁵ Thirdly, the activist groups (*associations plus activistes*) combine a missionary function with a political programme. He argues that it is only the activist groups which merit the label 'Islamist', and this conscious attempt to demythologise the hysteria surrounding Islam is common to his work, an essential aspect of the critique of Orientalism, and inspirational to this thesis.

The fourth contribution of this thesis is that it analyses the relationship between this diversity and the Orientalist stereotype of homogeneity, something which is missing from all of the literature reviewed in this introduction (though Al-Azmeh alludes to it), and which I regard as the single most original contribution of this thesis. The discussion of the first three contributions demonstrates where this one can be situated with reference to the existing literature, and the gaps which are filled by this thesis. As has been shown, others have pointed out that there is a stereotype of homogeneity, and that there is in fact diversity, but here the relationship between the two is conceived in terms of the dialectical relationship between Orientalism and Muslim identities.

The fifth contribution, and the last which pertains to the thesis *as a whole*, is that the other contributions are made in the context of a direct British-French comparison. There are so many works which discuss Muslims in the United Kingdom *or* in France that it would be impossible to review them all, though some are cited towards the end of this

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⁵ The MTI (*Mouvement de la Tendance Islamique*) is an 'Islamist' movement based in Tunisia, a cousin of the better known Algerian-based FIS (*Front Islamique du Salut*). The Tablighi Jama'at is the subject of a number of other works, for example Haq (1972), Dassetto (1988), Metcalf (1993), Diop (1994), King (1994) and Terrel (1994).

literature review,⁶ but they do provide a great deal of source material which is of use in making a direct comparison. Other works which are, in a sense, comparative, are often written on a country by country basis, so there is a danger of their approach becoming somewhat mechanical, and of generalising rather than attempting to make genuine comparisons, which this thesis does. Jørgen Nielsen (1995b) covers the history and contemporary situations of Muslims in France, West Germany, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Belgium, Scandinavia and Southern Europe, and, in keeping with the point which I make above, he readily admits that the material on each country will appear brief and even superficial to anyone with a thorough knowledge of that country. However, he states his intention that 'the chapters on other countries will be a useful beginning for comparative purposes' (Nielsen 1995b: ix), and it is my opinion and experience that he has succeeded in this intention. He also addresses some issues on a Europe-wide basis, such as family, law, culture, Muslim organisations and European integration, and makes a pertinent comparison between the United Kingdom and France, by suggesting that the Rushdie affair and the *affaire du foulard* (which I discuss in Chapter 8) revealed a common conflict, between the right of parents to educate their children according to their own values, and the principle of education into a national culture. His work has also been helpful to my reflections on Muslim identities (Nielsen 1987), and on relationships between the religious and political spheres of Western societies (Nielsen 1995a).

Another approach is taken by Gerholm and Lithman (eds) (1988), who also take a country by country approach, but address specific issues rather than give a quasi-encyclopaedic account. A list of some of the subjects which are covered in various

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⁶ Readers who are looking for a foothold in the relevant literature can be directed initially to bibliographies by Joly and Nielsen (1985) and Vertovec (1993) for the United Kingdom, and the 'classic' works by Kepel (1991), in spite of his occasional sensationalism, and Etienne (1989) for France.

chapters gives an indication of the book's diversity: there are chapters on the *Tablighi Jama'at* and Sufi organisations in Belgium, on migrant Muslim women and the children of Muslim migrants in France, on Muslims in Birmingham (examined from an ethnographic perspective and from the perspective of the urban sociology of religion), and on local authority responses to Muslims in Britain. I read this work when I was starting to prepare this thesis, and it contributed to my early understanding of the relevant issues. However, this is not an attempt at direct comparison.

There are, however, some French works which address issues of comparison between the United Kingdom and France, but they focus on specific issues, principally the philosophies of 'integration' and the nation state which are represented by both countries (a subject which is addressed later in this literature review).⁷ Didier Lapeyronnie's (1993) study, although it never focuses explicitly on Muslims, contains comparative and in-depth analyses of these issues, which are in the background of this thesis and almost any study of Muslims in Western Europe. The collection edited by Michel Wieviorka (1997) addresses the same issues, and includes a chapter on Islam (Khosrokhavar 1997). Its main focus is the debate about multiculturalism in France, and the French perception of multiculturalism as an 'Anglo-Saxon' ethos means that there is a comparative dimension to the whole book, which is most explicit in the chapter by Lapeyronnie (1997). These works must count as essential reading for anyone interested in a direct comparison between these two countries, but their focus on issues surrounding 'integration' and the nation state means that they are of more interest to a French readership than to anyone else, and they neglect the diversity of issues which are of concern to Muslims in Western Europe. Nevertheless, Christopher Husbands (1995) has addressed political discourses about 'Muslim assimilability' in the United Kingdom.

⁷ For a comparative article on Islamic schools in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, which is relevant to Chapter 8 of this thesis, see Dwyer and Meyer (1995).

France and The Netherlands, showing that comparable issues can produce 'moral panics' in countries other than France. Kepel's (1994, 1997) comparison is broader in its scope, and includes the United States as a third pole of comparison, but its sensationalism has been criticised, and it does not meet the requirements of a critique of Orientalism.

The other contributions have been identified as contributions which are made by individual parts of this thesis, rather than by the thesis as a whole, so I propose to discuss them more briefly. The first of these, the sixth contribution, is that the thesis provides an analysis of Islamophobia, and an evaluation of an emergent critique of Islamophobia. The only systematic treatment of the subject of Islamophobia which has so far been published is the Runnymede Trust report (Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia 1997b), though it is also discussed by Christopher Husbands (1995). I am particularly enthusiastic about the Runnymede Trust document, as it has provided a great deal of source material which I have used. However, it is written from a policy angle, and does not attempt an analysis of Islamophobia—its origins, expressions in the context of different nation states, and its relationship with racism—which is made in this thesis. The relevant chapter of this thesis (Chapter 3) is based on a paper which is due to be published elsewhere (Brown, forthcoming), though here I place a stronger emphasis on the relationship with Orientalism, as well as racism.

The seventh contribution of this thesis is that it furthers our understanding of the social significance of Muslim-Christian dialogue, and its significance to the construction of Muslim identities. There is a large literature on the subject of Muslim-Christian dialogue, mostly written from a theological (for example, Breimer 1991; Carey 1996; Sachedina 1997; Smith 1997) or historical (for example Haddad and Haddad, eds, 1995; Khalaf 1997; Watt 1991) perspective, and even those which have a sociological dimension (for example Michel 1997; Waardenburg 1997) tend to see the significance of

dialogue in terms of peace and reconciliation. Of course, this is a worthy objective, but it does not show that dialogue is significant on a wider social or societal scale, an issue which I do address in Chapter 9 of this thesis. Some other issues which are discussed in this thesis are discussed in the context of Muslim-Christian relations. For example, the wearing of the *hijab* in French state schools is discussed by the Groupe de Recherche Islamo-Chrétien (1996), the place of Christianity and Islam in a 'secular' United Kingdom is discussed by Newbiggin, Sanneh and Taylor (1998), but these tend to see dialogue in terms of a religious challenge to secularisation. This challenge is central to my analysis, but I also argue that dialogue says something about the social *ambience* in which it takes place, and it is necessary to recognise this if we are to further our sociological understanding of the subject.

Questions about the *hijab* and secularisation are connected with the penultimate contribution, which is that the thesis provides some critical reflections on current debates about 'integration', 'assimilation' and 'multiculturalism'. Some relevant works have already been cited in this literature review, for example Lapeyronnie (1993), Wieviorka (ed.) (1997) and Kepel (1994, 1997), all of whom take these issues as a point of comparison between the United Kingdom and France. Also of significance is Alec Hargreaves's (1995) work, which discusses processes of migration to and settlement in France, socio-economic condition of the emergent communities of migrant origin, the emergence of new ethnic, religious and territorial identities, and effects which this has had on French discourses about the French nation, with concomitant effects on state policies of integration. Elsewhere, he relates these issues to the creative literature of 'Beur' writers (that is, writers of North African origin who have been born in France), and to the paradox of young people of North African origin rejecting Islamic beliefs and

moral values, but at the same time emphasising a Muslim identity (Hargreaves 1997; Hargreaves and Steuhouse 1991).

'Integration', 'assimilation' and 'multiculturalism' are issues of particular concern in the French literature which is relevant to this thesis, and much of it is reviewed by John Crowley (1992). He believes that the 'apparently complacent adherence, even among social scientists, to the virtues of the traditional French model of integration ... is steadily if slowly being corrected' (Crowley 1992: 165). It is slow, as is evidenced by works (for example Todd 1994; Roman 1995) which persist in extolling the virtues of assimilation over multiculturalism, and the exaggerated significance which is attributed to cultural symbols such as French or 'foreign' food (see Tribalat 1995: 128-9, 134-5). However, my main concern lies elsewhere. It is that there is an unwarranted assumption, in much of the above literature, that the United Kingdom and France really do represent different models of integration (that is, multiculturalism and *assimilation* respectively), and this assumption is criticised in Chapter 7 of this thesis, particularly section 7.4. There, I argue that the philosophy is different, but the practice is very similar.

The final contribution is that the thesis presents original empirical data, something which must be true of all doctoral theses in the social sciences. However, I make this point to demonstrate that my empirical data is distinct from that presented in other books, articles and theses. It is geographically distinct because it focuses on Glasgow and Lille, and it is conceptually distinct because it emphasises diversity.

Philip Lewis's (1994b) book has the virtue of looking at the diversity of Islamic institutions in South Asia and in the United Kingdom, focusing on their reproduction through the migration process, and at questions of Muslim leadership, authority and representation. However, it concentrates heavily on Bradford, which does have one of the largest and most important Muslim communities in the United Kingdom, but is also

in some ways atypical, because of its size, economic situation (through the textile industry and its decline), political importance (through the Bradford Council of Mosques), and because of the numbers of Muslims of Kashmiri origin and Sufi Muslims of the Barelwi tradition. Other works have focused, for example, on Muslims in Bristol (Jeffery 1976), Birmingham (Joly 1988) or Manchester (Scantlebury 1995), but there are few which focus on Muslims in Glasgow (for 'ethnic minorities' in Glasgow, see, for example, Bowes, McCluskey and Sim 1990a, 1990b, 1990c; Bowes and Domokos 1993; McFarland 1994; McFarland, Dalton and Walsh 1989). Other works which focus on Bradford and West Yorkshire discuss specific issues, such as religious beliefs and practices (Wilkinson 1988), religious and ethnic identities (Knott and Khokher 1993), gender roles (Afshar 1989; Mirza 1989), or the Rushdie affair (Samad 1992), but they do not emphasise the diversity which is emphasised in the empirical data of this thesis.

The same can be said of French studies, which frequently concentrate on Paris (for example Kepel 1991; Telhine 1991; Terrel 1994). Other important local, microsociological studies of Muslims elsewhere in France focus on particular issues, such as young people's groups in the north of France (Babès 1995). Jocelyne Cesari (1994) does insist on the diversity of Islam, but focuses on Marseilles, which has many of the same difficulties as Bradford when it comes to understanding the whole country. This thesis fills a gap, in that its empirical data is taken from the Lille area, and it emphasises diversity. Thus, it also fills a gap which is left by Khelifi Boualem's (1982) local historical study of people of North African origin in Lille, particularly the district of Wazemmes (which is where my French fieldwork was concentrated), from the late 1940s to the 1960s, and Philippe Aziz's (1996) much criticised work on Roubaix, which takes sensationalism to such a level that it not only neglects a critique of Orientalism, but becomes one of those works which the critique of Orientalism must criticise.

Part I

Western representations of Islam

2. On the critique of Orientalism

2.1. Introduction

The central questions which are being examined and addressed in this thesis were summarised, in the introduction to the thesis, as follows:

1. What perceptions exist of a West-Islam dualism, homogeneity of Islam, and homogeneity of the West?
2. How are they expressed?
3. What are their causes and effects?
4. What dissenting voices exist, how are they expressed, and what are their causes and effects?

These questions have been developed as a result of reflection about the critique of Orientalism, the perception that Islam and the West stand in dualistic opposition to each other, and the epistemological consequences of such a reflection. This chapter is an attempt to present this reflection, and to outline its significance. We can say that the above questions are purposely directed towards a critique of Orientalist discourse, particularly the perception of Islam as homogeneous and radically distinct from the West. As I studied Muslim identities in the West, it became clear that there was a tension between the affirmation of these identities and an effective critique of Orientalism.

Discourse about Muslim identities in the West would involve asking how the West perceives Muslims, and how Muslims respond to this perception, that is, how it affects their way of seeing themselves and the West. The problem is that Islam and the West are represented here in subject-object terms, thus creating a dualism which undermines the critique of Orientalism. Although the existence of a Muslim identity in the West demonstrates that the West-Islam dualism is, to some extent, perceived and lived by Muslims themselves, the related theoretical, epistemological and historical assumptions are mistaken. As we argue below, such a dualism involves reification of the categories, it implies that Islam and the West are homogeneous, and it ignores the ways in which these categories have constituted each other. So we have a tension which must be addressed.

In this chapter, we shall look at Orientalism, and the critique of Orientalism, starting from the work of Edward Said, then attempting to move beyond his framework and take more account of the complexity and heterogeneity of Orientalist discourse. In order to do this, I attempt to move away from 'Occidentalism' theories—which, I shall argue, maintain the subject-object relationship between the West and Islam in reducing Islam to the role of a passive victim of Orientalism—towards a theory of interaction between Islam and the West, and between Orientalism and Occidentalism, by which they are influenced and constituted, positively and negatively, through this interaction. In later chapters, we shall look at the idea of identity in general, and Muslim identities in particular, and see to what extent this enables us to address this tension.

2.2. Edward Said's critique of Orientalism

To express things simply, the thesis of Said's *Orientalism* (subtitled *Western conceptions of the Orient*), is that the Orient was a Western conception, a Western

creation and a tool of Western hegemony. When we refer to the Orient, we refer to somewhere that is East. However, this is East from a particular point, which is Europe. In other words, the Orient is a Eurocentric notion, not one which would be relevant to the actors (the so-called 'Orientals') themselves, until they enter into a relationship with Orientalist discourse or colonial domination. Geographically, Said limits his study to the area now constituting Egypt, the Arabian peninsula, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Israel/Palestine and Jordan. He argues that a dualism of Orient and Occident has been constructed through Western literature, politics and popular discourse since at least the eleventh century, though again he limits his focus to the colonial period. As I stated in the introduction to this thesis, Said identifies three types of Orientalism: a comprehensive Western discourse (popular, literary, journalistic, academic); an academic discipline; and a system of colonial institutions. What they had in common was that they presented the Orient as fundamentally different from the West, essentially inferior to the West, and as homogeneous and unchanging.

The Oriental/Occidental dualism is particularly important to the first type of Orientalism, which Said examines in detail in *Orientalism*, *Culture and Imperialism*, and *Covering Islam*. Because the West considers the Orient to be fundamentally different from itself, it produces an image of the Orient which does not need to be validated outside its own system. One example was the Asiatic mode of production in the work of Marx and Engels. Since, according to the *Communist Manifesto*, all history was the history of class struggle, the conclusion drawn from the absence of evidence of class struggle in India was that 'Indian society has no history at all, at least no known history' (Marx and Engels 1968: 81). Hence, the Asiatic mode of production had no internal class conflict and was therefore static, that is, history-less (see Said 1995: 153-7; Turner 1978: 26-7).

The second type of Orientalism is an academic discipline. On one level, this is merely the academic study of the Orient. However, since this Orient has been defined into existence by the West, and perceived as inferior, homogeneous and unchanging, academic Orientalism has studied this perception and contributed to its perpetuation. The extensive use of the Qur'an (written in the seventh century) for studying the contemporary Muslim world is cited as an example. More importantly, this kind of academic discourse provided the legitimation for colonialism. So the third type of Orientalism is defined by Said (1995: 3) as 'the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient—dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient'. In short, Orientalism is a form of what Foucault called power/knowledge. In the colonial period, the central stereotype of the Orient was related to its sensuality (Arabian nights, belly dancers, sultans, harems). Turner (1994: 98) writes:

Because the Orient in Western imagination is often perceived as the fantastic, it is associated with sexual fantasies. Apart from conventional themes of secret harems, the Orient was populated by androgynes, slave traders, lost princesses and the degenerate patriarch. The Orient was a world of excess.⁸

This assertion can be illustrated by a quotation from Edward William Lane's *An account of the manners and customs of the modern Egyptians*, which almost has the flavour of an eyewitness account, but which we can conclude is rather imaginative, if 'only on the grounds of what is medically possible:

⁸ Turner continues: 'In his comparative sociology of religion, Weber developed a global theory of asceticism in which the sensuality of Islam was contrasted with the denial of luxury and the ascetic demands of Protestant spirituality' (Turner 1994: 98).

When the scyyid 'Omar, the Nakeeb el-Ashráf (or chief of the descendants of the Prophet) ... married a daughter, about forty-five years since, there walked before the procession a young man who had made an incision in his abdomen, and drawn out a large portion of his intestines, which he carried before him on a silver tray. After the procession, he restored them to their proper place, and remained in bed many days before he recovered from the effects of this foolish and disgusting act (cited in Said 1995: 111).

This emphasis on excess, or, in other contexts, sensuality, affected the whole way in which the Orient was perceived. In French Orientalism, this sensuality was associated with an irrationality of the senses, what could almost be called a Freudian domination of sexual symbols over the whole of Oriental society. British Orientalism was much more concerned with cause and effect: there was something idle about the Orient, this was explained by its sensuality, and the sensuality was itself explained by climate and religion.⁹ In addition, because of the dualism of Orient and Occident, for the West to be perceived as progressive, the Orient had to be seen as static. For the West to be mature, the Orient had to be childish. The West was rational and virtuous, the Orient irrational and degenerate. The West was temperate, so the Orient was sensual. According to Said, Gérard de Nerval, a French writer and traveller, saw the Orient as a kind of dreamworld, "*le pays des rêves et de l'illusion*", which, like the veils he sees everywhere in Cairo, conceal a deep, rich fund of feminine sexuality'. Said also notes that this discovery brought out complex responses, even frightening self-discoveries, in the Orientalists (Said 1995: 40, 182, 188).

⁹ This distinction may also reflect a tendency of people in the United Kingdom to view the French as sexually permissive.

In his paper, 'Orientalism reconsidered', Said suggests that there was a 'correspondence between suppressed Victorian sexuality at home, its fantasies abroad, and the tightening hold on the male late nineteenth century imagination of imperialist ideology' (Said 1985: 23-4). In *Orientalism*, he uses Gustave Flaubert as an example. Of Flaubert's mistress Kuchuk Hanem, an Egyptian dancer and courtesan, Said writes: 'She was surely the prototype of several of his novels' female characters in her learned sensuality, delicacy, and (according to Flaubert) mindless coarseness. What he especially liked about her was that she seemed to place no demands on him...' (Said 1995: 186-7). There seems to be an echo of Foucault here (recognised by Said as a major influence on his own work), in that the discourse of Orientalism is seen as an instrument of conflict between power and desire; the private sexuality (and *scientia sexualis*) of the Victorian West is contrasted with the public sensuality (*ars erotica*) of the Orient. By placing no demands on him, Kuchuk Hanem brought out the literary and sexual power in Flaubert; in the same way, the Orient brought out the political power in the West, including the power to define the Orient, and to shape the Orient. The Orient was not normal, but we were. Therefore, it was our mission to purify the Orient (the Orient did place demands on us), but the Orient could never purify us. This idea was at the origin of a number of nineteenth-century clichés, for example the *vocation supérieure*, *mission civilisatrice*, and the white man's burden.

While Orientalism has involved a conception of the Orient as homogeneous and unchanging, the critique of Orientalism must not fall into the converse trap of perceiving Orientalist discourse as unchanging. The durability of Orientalism depends on its being responsive to changing circumstances. There are a number of historical events and processes which Said identifies as having been important sources of change in Orientalist discourse. The building of the Suez canal in the 1880s marked the crowning

achievement of Orientalism—the West had succeeded, not only in shaping ideas about the Orient, but literally shaping its geography. However, the building of the Suez canal also reduced the distance of the Orient and in so doing destroyed its whole exoticism. The Orient was no longer another world, but had become an administrative unit in the whole schema of colonialism (see Said 1995: 88-92). In the twentieth century, the emergence, diffusion and partial success of anti-colonial movements demonstrated that the Orient was neither homogeneous nor unchanging. It had changed from the days of overt hegemonic colonialism, and it was beginning to fragment into nation states, sometimes in conflict with each other.

What remained constant at the heart of Orientalist discourse was that the West considered itself intellectually superior to the Orient. As the Orient has become less exotic, the sensual stereotype seems to have become less important, as it has been replaced with a discourse of Islamic fundamentalism, fanaticism (terrorism, cutting off people's hands, frenzied crowds shouting Arabic slogans), and oppression of women. The formation of the state of Israel, the oil crisis of the 1970s, and the Iranian revolution are events which have contributed to this paradigm shift within Orientalism, which has reinforced a perception that 'we' are more intellectually advanced than 'they' are, so we have to make their decisions for them. Ultimately, it legitimates a discourse of protecting 'our' oil, even though it lies underneath 'their' countries (see Said 1997b). Although colonialism, as a world system, has come to an end in its classic form, it continues in other ways, through the United Nations for example. These postcolonial institutions have served as tools of legitimization in, for example, the Gulf War, which was fought to protect 'our' oil supplies, and they seek international co-operation in 'the fight against terrorism'—though not all terrorism, as the term is selectively defined in order to preserve Western domination.

2.3. Moving beyond Said

Said's critique of Orientalism has itself been subject to a great deal of criticism. Many of these criticisms are listed by Turner (1994: 5-7): Said's argument in *Orientalism* was not really original; while his critique of French Orientalism was strong, he was weaker on British Orientalism, and neglected German and Russian/Soviet Orientalisms;¹⁰ he concentrates on textuality and textualism, without looking at how fictional texts relate to the period under consideration; there seems to be a gap between this textual epistemology in *Orientalism*, his realism in *Covering Islam*, and his political commitments related to Palestine, that is, his work lacks praxis; he is tainted by a chain of influences which relates him to Foucault, Foucault to Heidegger, and Heidegger to fascism. In some cases, this seems to be a case of Orientalists reacting to a perceived threat from Said, or to his angry rhetorical tone (for example Lewis 1982a, 1982b; see also the reply in Said 1982, 1995: 342-7). In these cases, it does seem that Said personalises the debate to the extent that he confuses the critique of Orientalism with the condemnation of specific Orientalists. In order to reply to Said, all that is needed is to show that an Orientalist is an honest and thorough scholar in order to rehabilitate Orientalism. But the rehabilitation of the Orientalist and the rehabilitation of Orientalism are not the same thing.

On the other hand, the style in which Said expresses his argument does not fundamentally alter its substance, and the criticisms outlined by Turner do not undermine the central argument of *Orientalism*. There is a need to clarify the parameters of the debate, which Akhbar Ahmed (1992: 185) attempts to do in the following terms:

¹⁰ Since the empirical content of this thesis consists of a comparison between the United Kingdom and France, I too have (intentionally) neglected other Orientalisms. Excellent discussions of German Orientalism, however, can be found in articles by Ulrich Haarmann (1994) and Baber Johansen (1994).

The heat and fury Edward Said generated by arguing that the West can know Islam only in a demeaning and exploitative manner has obscured a central question raised by him: can the West ever hope to understand, objectively and sympathetically, the other, that is, foreign cultures, alien peoples...? In an important sense he has led us into an intellectual cul-de-sac. In attempting to transcend the idea of the orientalist system we end up by replacing one system with another. There remains the real danger of simplifying the complex problem of studying the other or the foreign. Said has left us at the end of the trail with what he set out to denounce: stereotypes, images devoid of substance. Orientalism is now an empty cliché, the orient a geographical location only in our imagination.

Bryan Turner (1994: 7) makes a similar point, though it is expressed in a slightly different way:

Another consequence of the debate about orientalism was an equally pernicious occidentalism, that is, a rejection of everything to do with the West and an implicit rejection of the legacy of modernization. This anti-modernist dimension of critical theory may explain some of the attraction of Heidegger's cultural elitism...

What both of these quotations point to is that Said's critique of Orientalism did not (provide an effective basis for a rejection, or even critique, of the West-Islam dualism. Certainly, there was an effective deconstruction of binary opposites like

progressive/static, mature/childish, rational/irrational, virtuous/degenerate and temperate/sensual. In addition, Said had argued and, in my judgement, clearly demonstrated, 'that "the Orient" is itself a constituted entity, and that the notion that there are geographical spaces with indigenous, radically "different" inhabitants who can be defined on the basis of some religion, culture or racial essence proper to that geographical sphere is equally a highly debatable idea' (Said 1995: 322). However, there was still a sense in which the West was perceived (even defined) as the active subject in the construction of this dualism, and the Orient as the passive object (or victim). Eventually, this leads to a new dualism of the authentic and traditional against the imported and alien. Turner (1994: 7) cites the example of 'the endless attempts to demonstrate that Ibn Khaldun was in fact the founding father of all social sciences against the claims of Marx, Weber and Durkheim', and his repeated references to Heidegger culminate in an analysis of numerous social philosophers and theorists (particularly Adorno and Bourdieu), showing that the authentic has been identified with elite culture, the imported with simulation and popular culture (Turner 1994: 117-31).

The apparently elitist elements in the work of Adorno, Bourdieu, or Said, may not constitute a major problem, and it may be that the distinction between authentic and imported is a useful one if it does not become reified in a dualism. In order to move beyond Said, we need to recognise that the West-Islam dualism continues to exist, and resolve to criticise and deconstruct this dualism. We also need to be careful that cultural elitism or 'authenticism', which is present in Said's work, does not obscure the constant mixing of cultures, and the epistemological/methodological consequences which this entails. Said (1985: 25) notes three preconditions for the critique of Orientalism, which may be lacking in his own work, but which provide a foundation for a more effective critique: an awareness of the diversity of the critic's potential subjects and audiences; a

praxis which is secular and/or plural, and in opposition to the authoritarian tendencies of mainstream Orientalism; and an openness to all sources of knowledge which are 'against the grain, deconstructive, utopian'.

Said compares the latter principle with Adorno's negative dialectics, and there does seem to be a kind of negative dialectic of Orientalist representations of Muslims and Muslim responses to Orientalism (representations of Orientalism, representations of the West, representations of themselves). This can be explained as follows. Discourses of Western intellectual superiority become particularly marked when we apply the model of the critique of Orientalism to representations of Muslim communities in Western Europe. It can be argued that the end of classic colonialism marked the beginning of large-scale migration from the former colonies to the West, and that this migration was part of a process by which the West maintained its power over the Orient (no longer defined geographically, but as a group of people, a society, a culture, a system of values). Muslims in the West have a number of options in responding to this internal Orientalism (to adapt the notion of internal colonialism from the work of Hechter, 1975, and Habermas, 1987), which could be summarised in three ideal types: assimilation; withdrawal from Western society; and a combined Muslim-Western identity. However, whichever option is chosen, Orientalist stereotypes are likely to be reinforced rather than effectively challenged. A decision to assimilate can be understood as accepting the superiority of Western culture and values, a decision to withdraw can reinforce a perception of Islam as radically incompatible with Western, 'civilised' values, and a combined identity will be seen as contradictory and irrational, or it will be supposed that there is something behind this combination, be it a barrier against the West (a negative interpretation of Gilles Kepel's *citadelle intérieure*—Kepel 1991: 25-60), or an attempt to infiltrate the West. Thus, in some ways, the interaction between Islam and the West

pushes the two further apart, creating a negative rather than positive dialectic. This process is examined more empirically in later parts of this thesis, particularly in Chapter 8.

There is a problem with this analysis, which is that the relationship between Islam and the West is still being analysed in subject-object terms. On one level, this is unavoidable, because Islam and the West are two distinct categories of analysis. On other levels, however, it must be avoided, for three reasons. Firstly, if we see Islam or the West as a subject, we reify these categories. Secondly, by reifying these categories, we assume that Islam and the West are both homogeneous, something which contradicts, or is contradicted by, the empirical evidence and the political imperatives of a critique of Orientalism. Thirdly, such a subject-object dualism obscures the fact that Islam and the West have been and remain *constitutive* of each other (see the discussion of Laroui, below), and this process is stronger than a mutual interaction.

2.4. The heterogeneity of Muslim perspectives

The earlier quotation from Turner (1994: 7), criticising the Occidentalism¹¹ in Said's work, points to the fact that analyses of the West and Islam in subject-object terms are not carried out solely by Westerners. Take the following citation from a Muslim apologist:

My constant endeavour has been to speak straight from the heart, without mincing words, and to offer some sincere suggestions to the Muslim brothers and sisters who have settled in the West, particularly in America. As for the

¹¹ The classic work on Occidentalism, albeit recent, is the volume edited by James Carrier (1995).

Western civilisation, it has been viewed from a height which Islam confers upon its followers and from which both the Old and the New Worlds seem narrow and empty, and their glitter false and unreal. The credit for this particular way of looking at things does not belong to me but to the Guidance and Message which imparts a new vision to man and causes the scales to fall from his eyes (Nadwi 1983: 20).

Nadwi makes an unambiguous distinction between Islam and the West, and his contention that Islam is superior is equally clear. Although he recognises a limited heterogeneity within Western civilisation—the distinction between the Old and New Worlds—his understanding of Islam is thoroughly essentialist. As one would expect from a theologian or apologist, Muslims are defined with respect to Islam ('the Guidance and Message'), rather than Islam being defined with reference to Muslims (which is more characteristic of a historical or social scientific approach), and this excludes a conception of Islam itself as plural and heterogeneous. There are, nevertheless, some dissenting voices among Muslim writers. Some, like Abdallah Laroui and Aziz Al-Azmeh have sought to interpret Islam in modernist terms; others, like Farid Esack (drawing on Fazlur Rahman and Mohammed Arkoun) have sought to reinterpret some Qur'anic concepts in order to develop a more 'progressive' and 'inclusive' Islam, which connects with issues of Muslim participation in interreligious dialogue. This demonstrates that Muslim discourses about the West are also heterogeneous.

Esack's (1997) critical discussion of Rahman and Arkoun provides the starting point for his Qur'anic hermeneutic of liberation and pluralism, in the context of a struggle against apartheid in South Africa which demanded a deepening of interreligious solidarity. Having insisted that 'the process of revelation itself was never independent of

the community's context but consisted of a dynamic interaction between the two' (Esack 1997: 16), he argues for a Qur'anic hermeneutics which differs from traditional Qur'anic studies (*'ulum al-Qur'an*) and interpretation (*tafsir*) in three ways:

1. *The necessity of context*: 'the insistence of hermeneutics on contexts and human contingency in the recovery of meaning implies that the Qur'an does not "mean" something outside socio-historical contexts but "is always possessed of *Deutungsbedurftigkeit* ... a text in need of interpretation".¹² In other words, without a context a text is worthless'.

2. *A plurality, or relativism, of meanings*: 'the stress on human agency in producing meaning is really opposed to the idea that God can supply people with watertight "correct" understandings..., "to write large the significance of human agency is to see that meaning is itself a contest within power relations; divinity lies within the working of that contest and cannot be predicated transcendently outside the contest as the guarantor of a finally achievable meaning"''.¹³

3. *Meaning emerges through interpretation and reception*: 'traditional Islamic scholarship has made a neat and seemingly unbridgeable distinction between the production of scripture, on the one hand, and its interpretation and reception on the other. This distinction is the crucial factor in the shaping of qur'anic hermeneutics, for it implies that the only hermeneutics Islam can presently cope with is that pertaining to interpretation and reception' (Esack 1997: 62-3).

¹² Martin (1982: 367).

¹³ Aitken (1991: 4).

Esack cites Rahman and Arkoun as being among a small minority of scholars who have addressed the issues of Qur'anic hermeneutics. Rahman maintained the uniqueness of Islam and the Qur'anic revelation, while arguing that it was the word of Muhammad, thus contingent on historical context and human interpretation, as well as the Word of God. His methodology can be summarised in the following steps: (i) understanding the Qur'an as a whole; (ii) studying the present historical situation and developing an understanding of it in terms of ethical principles; (iii) *then* developing an understanding of the Qur'an *in the light of* this situation and understanding; (iv) re-applying this understanding to the general ethical and social principles and objectives; (v) applying these general objectives to the present social and historical situation (praxis).

While Rahman's approach grounds the reception of the Qur'an in concrete social and historical circumstances, he remained committed to the possibility of gaining access to the absolute truth and objective interpretation of the Qur'an. Arkoun, however, goes further:

The discourse on revelation and historicity led by Arkoun is decidedly more radical and critical than that of any other contemporary Muslim scholar.... Arkoun argues that the present crisis of legitimacy for religion compels scholars to 'only speak of heuristic ways of thinking'.¹⁴ While he insists on a historical-sociological-anthropological approach, he does not deny the importance of the theological and the philosophical. Instead, he says that he wishes 'to enrich them by the inclusion of the concrete historical and social conditions in which Islam always has been practised' (Esack 1997: 68-9).¹⁵

¹⁴ Arkoun (1987: 10).

¹⁵ Arkoun (1987: 3).

Arkoun's approach to hermeneutics is what could be described as a deconstruction of the Qur'an. Although Esack is critical of the distance between deconstruction and practical struggle for social justice, he argues that it provides a basis for a pluralistic conception of truth (religious, ideological and intellectual). On the other hand, he is critical of Rahman's commitment to absolute truth and a single 'correct' interpretation of the Qur'an, but supports his contention that such interpretation must take place in a social, political and historical context. Thus, Esack's grounded pluralism provides an epistemological and theological basis for interreligious dialogue and for a recognition that different religions and ideologies can have the same objectives. On a theoretical level at least, it undermines the West-Islam dualism in Muslim thought, and in the thought of other religions.

Laroui (1990) emphasises the historical interactions between Western and Arabo-Islamic thought, and shows that, although they have a great deal in common at various points in history, these interactions have led each culture to be more and more clearly defined *vis-à-vis* the other—a root of the West-Islam dualism which we have considered. He writes:

Europe, arabité (*Urupa*, 'Uruba); chaque mot réfère ici à une tradition culturelle dans la formation de laquelle ont concouru la géographie, l'économie, la psychologie, l'organisation étatique, la langue, la religion, sans que jamais un de ces éléments ait été le seul déterminant.... Dans l'un et l'autre cas, il s'agit d'une tradition culturelle élaborée à travers des siècles par l'action conjuguée de données relativement constantes et d'événements qui imposent des choix irréversibles. Siècle après siècle se combinent structures constantes

et événements contingents irréversibles pour former deux traditions bien individualisées (Laroui 1990: 155).¹⁶

The confrontation between Western and Arabo-Islamic cultures had four important effects, identified by Laroui as complementarity (*complémentarité*), identification (*identification*), solidarity (*solidarité*) and ambiguity (*ambiguïté*). The dynamic of complementarity emerges when two antagonistic societies are faced with the same problem. Where solutions a and b are available, and one society chooses a, the other *must* 'choose' b (unless it chooses not to find a solution at all):

... le fait de complimenter a présidé aux choix qu'ont fait au cours d'un millénaire Arabes et Européens dans des domaines aussi variés que la théologie (trinitarisme contre unitarisme), la métaphysique (immanence contre transcendance), l'esthétique (figuration contre abstraction), l'art militaire (infanterie contre cavalerie), l'architecture (maison ouverte contre maison fermée), urbanisme (rues orthogonales contre rues concentriques); je ne cite pas le costume, la toilette, la cuisine, la maintien que chacun peut encore détecter du premier coup d'œil (Laroui 1990: 156).¹⁷

¹⁶ 'Europe, Arabness (*Uruba*, 'Uruba); each word refers here to a cultural tradition, in whose formation geography, economics, psychology, state organisation, language and religion have concurred, without any one of these elements ever having been the sole determinant.... In each case, it is a question of a cultural tradition being developed over centuries through a combination of relatively constant facts and events which impose irreversible choices. Century after century constant structures and fortuitous, irreversible events have combined to form two highly individualised traditions.'

¹⁷ '... the dynamic of complementarity has presided over the choices which Arabs and Europeans have made for the past millennium, in domains as varied as theology (trinitarianism versus unitarianism), metaphysics (immanence versus transcendence), aesthetics (figuration versus abstraction), military strategies (infantry versus cavalry), architecture (the open house versus the closed house), urban planning (orthogonal streets versus concentric streets); I have not cited clothing, washing, or food, which everyone can detect immediately.'

This in turn produced the effect of identification, that is, Europeans and Arabs identifying themselves with these meta-civilisations:

Grecs contre Perses, Romains contre Carthaginois, Byzantins contre Arabes, Francs contre Sarrazins, Slaves contre Tatars, Castellans contre Andalous, Espagnols contre Ottomans.... Qu'un Celte écossais puisse se croire le fils spirituel de la Rome impériale et un Berbère nord-africain l'héritier du Hannibal, voilà la preuve de l'efficacité des identifications mythiques (Laroui 1990: 157).¹⁸

Although positivist history has done something to combat these assumptions, there has emerged a political, economic and commercial solidarity (Laroui's third effect) between the countries of the 'West'/'North', and these same relations of solidarity link Arab, other Muslim and non-aligned countries. While Laroui recognises it would be naive to argue that this is caused by cultural affinities, there is, he argues, a correlation (Laroui 1990: 158).

Finally, there is the effect of ambiguity. Identification *vis-à-vis* the Other means that the identity of Self is not defined; it is sufficient to define the Other. We know that Arabs are not all Muslim, Oriental, nomadic Saracens—but the need is still there to put someone else in the role of Other. Thus emerges the homogeneous view of Muslim culture, which is :

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¹⁸ 'Greeks against Persians, Romans against Carthaginians, Byzantines against Arabs, Francs against Saracens, Slavs against Tartars, Castellans against Andalusia, Spaniards against Ottomans.... That a Scottish Celt could believe himself to be the spiritual son of imperial Rome, and a North African Berber the heir of Hannibal, is proof of the strength of mythical identifications.'

... un *a priori* qui fait partie de la conscience culturelle européenne. Si l'art occidental est évolution, développement, diversification, l'art musulman, par contraste méthodologique, doit être stabilité, répétition, monotonie (Laroui 1990: 160).¹⁹

Thus, Laroui seems to arrive at the Orientalist paradigm, whereby Islam and the West are defined as dualistic opposites, albeit by a different route from Said. However, he does express his critique in more interactive terms—while the West and Islam are perceived as interacting in subject-object terms, there is not a representation of one as active and the other passive. He also hints at a number of solutions:

Dans une situation de complémentarité, l'autre est ambigu précisément pour que le soi puisse être nettement défini; dès que l'autre est connu en lui-même et pour lui-même, c'est le soi qui devient problématique.... Si ce dilemme inquiète peu les Européens, il est, à tort ou à raison, au premier plan des préoccupations d'une certaine intelligentsia arabe; et ce qu'on appelle la renaissance islamique n'en est que la manifestation la plus bruyante.

Doit-on se définir toujours à travers l'autre? La question n'a de sens, me semble-t-il, que dans le cadre d'un métaphysique substantialiste. Dans une philosophie du devenir, la définition du soi peut être positive sans passer forcément par la négation de l'autre. On y retrouve la même dialectique, mais au lieu d'opposer le soi à autrui, on y confronte le moi présent au moi passé ou futur (Laroui 1990: 165).²⁰

¹⁹ '... an *a priori* which is a part of European cultural consciousness. If Western art is evolution, development, diversification, Muslim art, by methodological contrast, must be stability, repetition, monotony.'

²⁰ 'In a situation of complementarity, the Other is ambiguous precisely so that the Self can be clearly defined; from the moment when the Other is known in and for herself, it is the Self which becomes

This particular insight will be important for our understanding of identity. As we shall see in Chapter 5, the contrast between the *moi présent* and the *moi passé ou futur* is fundamental to an existentialist understanding of identity—it is something which changes, as we have the freedom to define who we *are*, not having to be what we *were*.

Al-Azmeh (1996) addresses themes similar to those of Laroui, though he insists on the heterogeneity of Islam, the West, and modernity. For him, the central issue in Orientalist discourse is the assumption that Islam is homogeneous, but he takes this further in arguing that this is a mirror image of neo-Afghanist thought. This concept situates contemporary 'Muslim radicalism' or 'fundamentalism' in a revival of the thought of Jamal al-din al-Afghani (1839-97). I would avoid applying the term 'fundamentalism' to Islam, but Al-Azmeh, having noted the American Protestant origin of the word, defines it as 'that moment in all religions which gives primitivism and primevalism precedence over history, which seeks to eliminate history and regard it as, at best, an illegitimate accretion onto the pristine beginning, and as such regard the present condition and its immediate precedents as corrupt, or at best as corruptions of an abiding beginning' (Al-Azmeh 1996: 135). The thrust of his argument is that this perception of Islam is based on the same homogeneous and essentialist stereotypes which are present in Orientalist discourses, and that it promotes these stereotypes.

This argument is closely related to my own, since it is centred on a critique of the idea that Islam is homogeneous. Like Said, Al-Azmeh concentrates on the cultural

problematic.... If this dilemma hardly worries the Europeans, it is, rightly or wrongly, among the greatest preoccupations of a certain Arab intelligentsia; and what we call the Islamic resurgence is only the hottest manifestation of this.

'Do we always need to define ourselves with reference to the Other? It seems to me that the question only has meaning in the context of a substantialist metaphysics. In a philosophy of becoming, the definition of the Self can be positive without necessarily entailing the negation of the Other. We find the same dialectic there, but instead of opposing Self and Other, we confront the present ego with the past or future ego.'

location of the stereotype of homogeneity, an argument which is encapsulated in the following quotation:

... the median discourse on Islam in Britain as in Europe is not predominantly or always overtly racist or quasi-racist. What we have is a culturalist differentialism;²¹ we are presented with supposed differences of 'culture' within a discourse which can be either xenophile or xenophobic: both are based on irreducible and impermeable difference.... Like racism, culturalist differentialism is an essentialist perspective system based on a notion of a pregiven 'culture' which, like race, has no sociological definition. Culture is here an obscure term coined to schematize without precision an indeterminate reality. Indeed, it is the enormous advantage of this notion that it is put forward to indicate sheer difference, for in this sense it cannot be disproved because it is tautological: chicken tandoori is not roast chicken; a black headscarf is not a fashion accessory; Muslim prayer is not a High Church Christmas mass. In all, tokens of a banal nature are taken up and affirmed as tokens—or stigmata—of difference, and differences elevated to Difference based in an absolutization of heritage which, although cultural, is attributed to a state of nature in which cultures subsist, according to this discourse (Al-Azmeh 1996: 4, 6).

Al-Azmeh insists that this cultural differentialism has been constructed both in Western Orientalist discourses and by some Muslims themselves. While Orientalist discourses assert the existence of a Muslim culture which is homogeneous, incompatible

²¹ The concept of differentialism is here borrowed from Taguieff (1987).

with Western culture, and capable of being analysed in subject-object terms from the West, Muslim proponents of cultural differentialism ('Muslim advocates of culturalist Islamism'—Al-Azmeh 1996: 6) have sought to identify an authentic Muslim culture which unites religious, cultural, ethnic and political identities into 'a fetishism of the collective self as a socio-political imperative' (Al-Azmeh 1996: 7).

If I may return to the Muslim apologist cited above, it is possible to see how this authenticist discourse, linking religion and culture, is produced in practice:

You are Muslims. I would therefore start by impressing upon you not to be overwhelmed by Western civilisation. You are the fruit of the tree of Prophethood. Live here, but keep away from slavish imitation of the West. Derive as much benefit as you can from your stay, but do not be swayed by crude and vulgar materialism. Remember the message of Islam and be on guard against the dissolution of your personality. Do not be ashamed of your faith and culture. Do not imagine that you are the beasts and they are men. No; you are the men, only if you are truly Muslims. This land [America] glitters with electric lights; even the night here is bright as day; but it is devoid of true effulgence, of blessedness and divine guidance (Nadwi 1983: 110).

Al-Azmeh argues that such cultural differentialism has important consequences for our theorising of identities. More strongly, there is 'an objective complicity between exoticism and the rhetoric of identity and authenticity' (Al-Azmeh 1996: 28), which has important political repercussions:

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The question of identity is thus very complex. An individual—or a society—does not have a single, exclusive, permanent and unalterable identity that perpetuates itself without internal differentiations. The assertion that a society has an exclusive single identity is not a description of its nature; it is a political move aimed at taking control of the society and dominating it in crushing fashion in the name of this alleged identity (Al-Azmeh 1996: 54).

There seems to be a link, if not synonymy, between the concepts of identity and homogeneity, which raises problems as we attempt to address the tension between the critique of the perception that Islam is homogeneous, and the recognition of Muslim identities. But this is a subject of Chapter 5, so we shall return to it then.

2.5. Heterogeneous Orientalisms

Before concluding with some observations about the theoretical and methodological consequences of this chapter, I look in more depth at the heterogeneity of Orientalist discourse, which I do through a comparison of French and British Orientalisms. Not only does this allow us to transcend the limitations of 'Occidentalism' thought, but it also provides a basis for the British-French comparison which is undertaken later in this thesis, and it enables us to continue the discussion of internal Orientalism which was begun above.

As was asserted above, Oriental sensuality was associated in French Orientalism with an irrationality of the senses, or a Freudian domination of sexual symbols over the whole of Oriental society, whereas British Orientalism was concerned with causes and effects: the idleness of the Orient was explained by its sensuality, and this sensuality was

explained by climate and religion. There is some irony in this, for it was in France that the discipline of *islamologie* was developed, and this discipline has had as its *raison d'être* the study of Islam *qua* religion. Nevertheless, it is possible to explain, at least partially, the French underemphasis on religion. The principle of *laïcité* has had an impact on empirical research, so that official researchers are unable to ask respondents to state their religious affiliation, and even non-official researchers have to tread carefully on this issue. Also, the French sociology of religion, following the Durkheimian tradition, has tended to avoid reference to Islam and the other Abrahamic faiths in favour of the 'elementary forms' of 'primitive' religion (Colonna 1995: 237 *et passim*; this contrasts with, for example, Weber's emphasis on the 'rationalisation' of religion). Said observes that 'in contemporary French Islamology ... there has grown up a tradition of identifying with "the vital forces" informing "Eastern culture"', a tradition whose emergence he attributes to Louis Massignon, and which gave rise to 'extraordinary achievements' from Islamologists such as Jacques Berque, Maxime Rodinson, Yves Lacoste and Roger Arnaldez (Said 1995: 265-6).

This does seem to be connected with the different colonial histories and rationales of Britain and France. Said (1995: 169) expresses it as follows:

What was the Orient for the individual traveller in the nineteenth century? Consider first the differences between an English speaker and a French speaker. For the former the Orient was India, of course, an actual British possession; to pass through the Orient was therefore to pass *en route* to a major colony. Already, then, the room available for imaginative play was limited by the realities of administration, territorial legality, and executive power.... In contrast, the French pilgrim was imbued with a sense of acute loss in the

Orient. He came there to a place in which France, unlike Britain, had no sovereign presence. The Mediterranean echoed with the sounds of French defeats, from the Crusades to Napoleon. What was to become known as '*la mission civilisatrice*' began in the nineteenth century as a political second-best to Britain's presence.

In other words, France had cultural capital, so, in order to magnify what power they had, French Orientalists represented the difference between Orient and Occident in cultural terms. The British had political power which, in Muslim history, had been associated with the caliphate, which in turn derived legitimacy from its claim to descent from the Prophet. Thus, they perceived their political power as power within and over Islam itself, and the British Orientalists' emphasis on religion reinforced this perception of politico-religious power. To put this at its simplest: the French used culture to explain religion, while the British used religion to explain culture; the French sent generals and men of letters to acculturate the Orient, while the British sent missionaries. Again, the French emphasis on sexual symbolism focused on the *display* of sensuality—a cultural phenomenon—while the British emphasis on climate and religion accentuated Britain's geographical power (represented by clichés like the Cape to Cairo, Britannia rule the waves, the sun never sets on the British empire), as well as the perception of politico-religious power.

Patterns of colonial control have certainly changed since the nineteenth century, but this analysis is still relevant. Earlier in this chapter, we considered the possibility that the model of the critique of Orientalism can be applied to representations of Muslim communities in Western Europe, what we have called internal Orientalism. To put it systematically, internal Orientalism has the following characteristics: it exists in a

postcolonial context, in which colonial control has been prolonged through the process of post-war labour migration to Western Europe; the quasi-autonomy which the Orient once had by virtue of its distance has been destroyed; the Orient is no longer understood geographically, that is, instead of distant territories being colonised, the lifeworld of 'the Orient', or of 'migrant communities' is colonised (compare Habermas 1987: 318ff *et passim*); the form of the colonisation is based on cultural practises and symbols, where there is a perception of incompatibility between Western values and those of the Other within; and, concomitantly, it may involve an element of differential racism (see Taguieff 1987).

Examples of internal Orientalism in practice include some Western reactions to the Rushdie affair and the *affaire du foulard* in France. Said implies that the Rushdie affair can be analysed in this way, as an example of his contention that the West has been capable of knowing Islam only in a demeaning way: 'The space between the bashing of other religions or cultures and deeply conservative self-praise has not been filled with edifying analysis or discussion. In the reams of print about Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, only a tiny proportion discussed the book *itself*' (Said 1993: 397). Keith and Pile's account is a part of this tiny proportion—they show that the genesis and progression of the Rushdie affair reflected the novel itself, the characters' search for their roots in London reflecting Muslims' search for spatial identity in Britain and 'the West' (Keith and Pile 1993b: 22-3). Central to what became known as the Rushdie affair was an imagined polarisation between the West and Islam, very like the West-Islam dualism, except that the Islam which is still Other is no longer perceived as being at a safe distance. Inevitably, the question arises of how the West should respond to this 'perceived danger. The Rushdie affair and the *affaire du foulard* have highlighted the possibility that this response may not always display the tolerant credentials on which the

West has prided itself. It is true that intolerance was displayed on both sides, but criticism of some Muslims (which became criticism of all Muslims) for burning copies of *The Satanic Verses* implied that the act of book burning had a single, homogeneous, universal cultural significance.

Jørgen Nielsen (1995b: 158) draws some parallels between the two 'affairs', focusing on the perceived incompatibilities between Islamic values and Western secularism, and between the rights of parents to determine the education of their children according to their own cultural or religious values and the principle of education into a national culture. Yet again, much of the discourse about the *affaire du foulard* has been premised on a homogeneous view of Islam and of Muslims. Some, for example Guy Coq (1996) and Camille Lacoste-Dujardin (1995), have associated the *hijab* with contemporary Islamist ideology. While Lacoste-Dujardin's argument is more sophisticated, based on an analysis of Arabic language and culture, less sophisticated analyses (such as Coq's) imply that behind every schoolgirl wearing a *hijab* is a fanatical warrior bent on terrorising France into becoming an Islamic Republic.

This can be seen as an example of my earlier assertion, that any response of Muslims to internal Orientalism will be seen as confirming its presuppositions. In these cases, there has been a certain withdrawal from Western values, which is seen as negating these values, and even civilisation itself. Where Muslim women have declined to wear the *hijab*, for example, they are valued according to what they are perceived to have in common with the West, rather than the cultural diversity which can enrich the West. At the same time, the attempt to form a combined Muslim-Western identity is seen as hiding something, either a barrier against the West or an attempt to infiltrate the West. As Jean-François Monnet (1990: 54) puts it: '*derrière les jeunes filles au foulard se cache*

la stratégie des islamistes'.²² What is important here, however, is that internal Orientalism is expressed in a diversity of circumstances, and in a diversity of ways.

2.6. Conclusion

In this chapter, we have seen that Islam and the West both exist, and that they are not the same thing. However, it is important to be clear about their ontology. They certainly do not possess *necessary* existence. They have come into existence historically and materially, but without clearly defined boundaries, and exist as categories or ideas with which people identify themselves. Indeed, their existence is *contingent* on people identifying themselves with these categories, and on the existence of a *vis-à-vis* to be defined against. We have looked at how this process of polarisation has taken place in different ways; through popular discourse, academic Orientalism and colonial institutions; through a perception of the Orient as sensual, then fanatical; through 'authenticist' discourses of critics of Orientalism, Muslim apologists, and others; through historical interactions between the West and Islam; through internal Orientalist discourses about the Rushdie affair, the *affaire du foulard*; and so on.

Having identified these processes of polarisation, this chapter has also insisted on the heterogeneity of Islam, of the West, and of Orientalist discourses. However, the critique of Orientalism, based on textual analyses, is one thing; studying Muslim identities without falling into the same traps as the Orientalists is quite another. There is an epistemological problem here, which Said identifies, in a quotation which has already been cited in this thesis:

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²² '... behind the young girls in headscarves hides the strategy of the Islamists'.

... knowledge of Islam and of Islamic peoples has generally proceeded not only from dominance and confrontation but also from cultural antipathy. Today Islam is defined negatively as that with which the West is radically at odds, and this tension establishes a framework radically limiting knowledge of Islam (Said 1997b: 163).

How is it possible for Westerners, such as myself, to write anything about Islam, or Muslim identities, which is not undermined by this framework? In an important sense, it is easy to criticise Orientalism, but is it possible to do any better than the Orientalists themselves? Said's preconditions for a critique of Orientalism, cited above, are helpful in this respect, so we shall examine them in turn.

The first of these was an awareness of the diversity of the critic's potential subjects and audiences. This chapter has insisted on the heterogeneity of Islam and Muslim identities, of the West, of Orientalism and Occidentalism, in ways which represent theoretical reflection and empirical data. The empirical point is emphasised in later chapters of this thesis, where I show that Islam is articulated in different ways, and has different meanings.

The second of Said's preconditions was a praxis which is secular and/or plural. It is worth noting that secular and plural may not be identical, or even compatible, and that this may be an issue of contrast between the United Kingdom and France. We shall consider this issue in Chapter 9 when we look at *laïcité* in France, and the possibility that religious pluralism is actually a response to the secularism (or secularity) of the French state. Here, we can note that Muslim identities in the West are often constructed *vis-à-vis* the West, and that the West is itself heterogeneous. The West has historically been defined partly in terms of Christianity, partly in terms of the secular. So we must look at

how Muslims interact with the structures of Christianity and secularity in the contemporary West, without losing sight of Arkoun's important point that 'the West must be defined to include Islam' (Arkoun 1994: 65).²³ I do this in Chapters 7, 8 and 9.

Said's third precondition was an openness to all sources of knowledge which are '*against the grain, deconstructive, utopian*' (Said 1985: 25). This has more to do with the motivation for a critique of Orientalism, or a study of Muslim identities, than with any specific methodological points. Not that it is a question of whether or not the researcher is attracted to Islam –we have insisted that Islam is heterogeneous, and there are power relations within Islam as well as between Muslims and Western power structures. The role of the researcher, then, must be to capture this variety, attempting to relate the stories of ordinary Muslims and the Muslim elite, the intellectuals and the imams, the secular and the devout.

This chapter has outlined a theoretical context for such an enterprise, but it is also necessary to take into account some specific discourses about Islam which exist in the West, in order to examine the dialectic of Orientalism and Muslim identities in greater detail. However, Muslim identities are not the only product of Orientalist representations. A fear, dislike or resentment of Islam can also emerge in the West, and this can influence the social interactions which take place between Muslims in the West and their 'non-Muslim' neighbours. Sometimes, this can lead to conflict, or Islamophobia, which is the subject of the next chapter.

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²³ Arkoun argues this on the basis that religions of the book are based on dogma, unlike 'Eastern religions', such as Buddhism, which preach liberty from dogma. Although this shifts the boundary of Orient and Occident further to the East, creating a new version of the same dualism, it is a useful insight.

3. Orientalism, racism and Islamophobia

3.1. Introduction

While Islamophobia can be seen as a form of interaction or prejudice which emerges from Orientalism, it can also be considered in relation to racism. This chapter provides an analysis of Islamophobia (the sixth contribution of the thesis, as outlined in section 1.6), examines its conceptual distinctions and overlaps with racism, and situates Islamophobia in a historical context, of which Orientalism is a key part. Although this chapter starts from the United Kingdom experience (in contrast to Chapter 8, which starts from the French experience), it does identify some comparisons, and some issues to be taken into account for further comparative research. Within the comparative framework of the thesis, this is important, because I draw an important distinction between Islamophobia in the United Kingdom and an '*Islamalgam*' in France. This distinction is significant in terms of the central questions of this thesis which refer to the expressions and effects of perceptions of a West-Islam dualism, and the fifth contribution, that the thesis makes a direct British-French comparison.

The three main sections of this chapter address different reasons for asserting that this is an important topic. In the first of these sections, entitled 'Islamophobia, Orientalism and religious prejudice', I continue the discussion from Chapter 2, by looking at the historical significance of Islamophobia in the dual context of Orientalist representations of Islam, which date back centuries, and the contemporary significance of

Islam in international politics. When we look at the areas of overlap between Islamophobia and racism, we notice that the category 'Muslim' is still being racialised, and this identification of 'Muslim' with 'Arab' or 'Pakistani' is part of a neo-Orientalist homogenising discourse which creates an amalgam of Muslims, Arabs, fundamentalists, extremists and terrorists. By racialisation is meant 'those instances where social relations between people have been structured by the signification of human biological characteristics in such a way as to define and construct differentiated social collectivities', and 'a process of categorisation, a representational process of defining an Other (usually, but not exclusively) somatically' (Miles 1989: 75). In recent European history, the racialisation of Bosnian Muslims, or at least their definition as an ethnic group (cf. Gellner 1983: 72), was a pretext for 'ethnic cleansing', and it was claimed that this was necessary to prevent the establishment of an Islamic fundamentalist state which would become a base for the Islamisation of Europe.

I also analyse, evaluate and utilise the comparison between Islamophobia and antisemitism, as both are based on some form of opposition to a group which is defined in religious *and* ethnic terms. In addition, there have been, in both cases, historical variations in the relative importance accorded to perceptions of religious and ethnic difference. Antisemitism *qua* racism has largely succeeded antisemitism *qua* religious hatred, but Islamophobia is still articulated in religious terms, perhaps increasingly so. Indeed, the medieval image of the 'Moor' or 'Saracen' was arguably more racialised than the contemporary image of the Islamic fundamentalist, or terrorist, who is both 'out there' and uncomfortably 'close to home', like an 'enemy within'.

In the second main section, I look at some examples of Islamophobic discourse, and draw attention to another important reason for making the conceptual distinction between Islamophobia and racism, namely the danger of conceptual inflation.

Phenomena such as the 'ethnic cleansing' of Bosnian Muslims necessitate a conceptualisation of Islamophobia which goes beyond the racism paradigm (see Miles 1993: 6-9; Banton 1991: 117-18). Islamophobia should be seen as a (passive) fear or (active) hatred of Muslims, rather than an ideology as such, though it does find ideological expressions. As many Muslims perceive themselves to be a transnational, multi-ethnic community (*ummah*), and this perception can be objectively verified, it is necessary to make an analytical distinction between racism and Islamophobia, reflecting a distinction between a racialised *ethnie* and a religious group which *may* become racialised, but whose alleged differences are not primarily biological or somatic. It is in making this analytical distinction that the conceptualisation of racism and Islamophobia needs to be developed and clarified.

One way in which this can be done is indicated in the third main section. We can examine Islamophobia and racism in a comparative perspective, and this is important because it points to the differing contexts in which Islamophobia is articulated (or some of the effects of cultural differences across Europe), and the common relationship between Islamophobia, state education and the politics of integration or multiculturalism. When we consider the relationship between Islamophobia and cultural or differential racism, we can observe that some reactions to the Rushdie affair in Britain, and the *affaire du foulard* (headscarf affair) in France, alleged a cultural and ideological incompatibility between Western values and those of Islam, sometimes to the extent of characterising Islam as inferior and archaic. In these cases, differential racist and Islamophobic discourses were mixed, and sometimes barely distinguishable, even though, as I have argued, the analytical distinction must be made.

3.2. Islamophobia, Orientalism and religious prejudice

The term Islamophobia was coined in the late 1980s, and first used in print in 1991, in the American journal *Insight*, which stated: 'Islamophobia also accounts for Moscow's reluctance to relinquish its position in Afghanistan, despite the estimated \$300 million a month it takes to keep the Kabul regime going'.²⁴ While there is a prominent fear of Islam in the international political arena, and this is by no means confined to Moscow, the relationship with domestic Islamophobia has contributed to the gradual (and still very partial) acceptance of the term in British media discourse. This has come about mainly through articles by academics such as Akbar Ahmed,²⁵ Yasmin Alibhai-Brown,²⁶ and Tariq Modood (who had used the term Muslim-phobia in the 1980s),²⁷ and letters by some activists. The first reference to Islamophobia which I have found in a British newspaper was in June 1994, in a letter to *The Times* from the Bangladeshi High Commissioner in London. He wrote:

I suspect that Islamophobia, under the guise of fundamentalist scaremongering, is being deliberately promoted in the overseas media, in order either to divert attention from socio-economic unrest in their own countries or to search for an 'enemy' following the collapse of communism.²⁸

Shortly afterwards, the term started to be applied to Muslims in Britain. Responding to an article by Suzanne Moore, a letter in *The Guardian*, from Saba Risahuddin and Richard Stone, argued:

²⁴ *Insight*, 4.2.91, p.37.

²⁵ *The Guardian*, 9.8.94, p.18.

²⁶ *The Independent*, 13.6.95, pp.1-3.

²⁷ *The Guardian*, 17.6.95, p.23.

²⁸ *The Times*, 28.6.94, p.21.

If Suzanne Moore had written 'All religions are not the same. People kill each other over these beliefs. Let's not pretend that Judaism is a cosy little belief system...' there would have been an immediate, and wholly justified, outcry from the Jewish community. Antisemitism, though regrettably far from dead, is at least no longer acceptable in Britain. But in fact she wrote it of Islam. And Islamophobia is alive and well. Prejudiced talk about Muslims and Islam is widespread, not just from the far right but also from mainstream politicians and commentators of both right and left, including secular liberals such as Ms. Moore.²⁹

Although the term Islamophobia has been used in academic journalism, it has also been used by Muslims to describe their own situation, and this has fed gradually into wider media discourse. An example is the *Glasgow Herald's* report of a speech by the late Kalim Siddiqui, leader of the Muslim parliament, in which he was reported as saying that 'a wave of Islamophobia was sweeping the country'.³⁰ However, the identification and critique of Islamophobia still seems to be a marginal discourse in the British media.

The term Islamophobia is still part of a marginal discourse, it does not (as far as I am aware) exist in another European language, and the term is relatively recent, but it nevertheless expresses something which is not only significant at the level of contemporary politics (national and international), but which also is deeply ingrained in European history. In this sense, Islamophobia is an adaptation of Orientalism, as discussed in Chapter 2, and as it has emerged historically. Although negative discourses about the barbarian Other from the East can be identified in the Greco-Roman period,

²⁹ *The Guardian*, 27.9.94, p.21.

³⁰ *Glasgow Herald*, 1.4.96, p.10.

and a perception of Islam as heretical or schismatic is almost as old as Islam itself,³¹ the real Oriental-Occidental dualism was established with the crusades. At this time, Europe was still in the aftermath of the Great Schism between the Western ('Catholic') and Eastern ('Orthodox') churches, and a common enemy made it possible to preserve the unity of Christendom, at least in the collective imagination. This is perhaps the beginning of the entrenchment of Islamophobia in Western culture and *doxa*.

The most obvious conceptualisation of Islamophobia, then, is as a form of religious prejudice (though its tangible expressions go beyond mere prejudice, which is in itself somewhat elusive and hidden). Religious prejudice is older than racism, but the two can be compared, and they do overlap, as the example of antisemitism demonstrates. Antisemitism, or something like antisemitism (often referred to as anti-Judaism), has also existed in Europe for centuries. The medieval legend of the wandering Jew, condemned to wander the earth forever for striking Christ as he carried the cross, was cruel reality for the Jewish people. Thomas Aquinas wrote that 'they are subject to perpetual servitude and their goods are at the disposition of the ruler', and the fourteenth-century flagellants blamed the Jews for plague, calling for them to be killed as an act pleasing to God (Southern 1970: 17, 308). This religious persecution is movingly and instructively recounted by the Catholic theologian Hans Küng (1978: 168):

In the Imperial Constantinian Church what had been pre-Christian, pagan anti-Judaism was given a 'Christian' stamp.... [T]he situation of the Jews became even more difficult, particularly after the high middle ages. Jews were slaughtered in Western Europe during the first three crusades and Jews in Palestine were exterminated. Three hundred Jewish communities were

³¹ Here, I am assuming that Islam began with the Prophet Muhammad (570-632), though Muslims would insist that he was the last of the Prophets, and that Islam is as old as humanity itself.

destroyed in the German empire from 1348 to 1349; Jews were expelled from England (1290), France (1394), Spain (1492) and Portugal (1497). Later came the horrifyingly virulent anti-Jewish speeches of the elderly Luther. Persecution of Jews continued after the Reformation, there were pogroms in Eastern Europe, and so on. It must be admitted that, during these periods, the Church probably slew more martyrs than it produced. All of which is incomprehensible to the modern Christian.

There are three points which can be made from this. Firstly, the form of 'anti-Judaism' changed from pre-Christian to Constantinian Christian—in both cases it was part of an overall state doctrine. Secondly, there is a link between anti-Judaism and the proto-Islamophobia of the crusades. Thirdly, there is a religious dynamic to earlier anti-Judaism which is 'incomprehensible' within a contemporary religious framework. This is because, as pre-Christian anti-Judaism gave way to Constantinian anti-Judaism, so religious anti-Judaism gave way to a secular *antisemitism*. Leon Poliakov reaches this conclusion: that the religious form of anti-Judaism gave way—due to the secularisation associated with the French revolution—to an antisemitism which was articulated in terms of racial conflict. However, all that had changed was the justification for hatred, not the hatred itself. As Poliakov (1975: 458-9) asserts: 'The conflict was regarded as racial, but if contemporaries formed an imaginary image of a Jewish race, they did so because a theologically condemned caste already existed.'

Thus, there was a racialisation of 'Jewishness'. But does a parallel racialisation occur with Muslims? Certainly, the category 'Muslim' is often racialised. In contemporary Britain and France, Muslims are often stereotyped as 'Pakistani' or '*maghrébin*', terms which may connote an irreconcilable 'racial' difference based on a

perception of somatic features, such as skin colour. However, the medieval image of the 'Moor' or 'Saracen' was also apparently racialised. The Jews have been seen as 'a people'; can we say the same about Muslims? The concept of the *ummah*, which has already been cited in this thesis, implies a transnational, multi-ethnic community. In other words, it implies that Islam is worldwide, and not the property of a particular ethnic group. But it also emphasises the community of Muslims, or imagined community of people who perceive themselves as having something in common, and a responsibility to one another. Thus, the idea of the *ummah* and that of the nation are remarkably similar.

As I have argued, the term Islamophobia is new, but it expresses something which is much older. It is this link between the origins and contemporary expressions of Islamophobia which have given rise to the term, as a result of a consciousness of the religiously-defined Other, and a growing awareness of the reality of Islamophobia, whether or not this is the term which is used. According to the Runnymede Trust's report on the subject, Islamophobia, like Orientalism, involves a perception of Muslim culture as inferior to Western culture, and this perception is expressed in the following ways:

1. That Muslim cultures mistreat women, but that other religions and cultures have outgrown patriarchy and sexism.
2. That Muslims co-opt religious observance and beliefs to justify political and military projects, but that such fusing of spiritual and temporal power is not pursued in societies influenced by other religions.
3. That they do not distinguish between universal religious tenets on the one hand and local cultural mores (for example, those of rural Pakistan) on the

other, but that a similar failure to distinguish between universal faith and local culture does not occur in other religions.

4. That they are literalist in their interpretation of scriptures, but that analogous literalism is found only on the fringes of other faiths.

5. That they have difficulties in sending representatives to meet external bodies, but that issues of political representation and legitimacy are unproblematic in other religions.

6. That they are compliant and unreflective, but that other religions and societies have their healthy internal debates and diversity (Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia 1997b: 7).

The juxtaposition of Muslims with other religions, cultures and societies clearly underlines and undermines the stereotypes involved. However, the perceptions of Muslim culture as inferior to Western culture are rarely, if ever, expressed in the form indicated. Certainly, it is often asserted that Muslims mistreat women, use religion to justify political and military projects, confuse religion and culture, interpret the Qur'an literally, face problems of political representation and legitimacy, and are compliant and unreflective. However, the reverse is not usually explicitly asserted regarding the West. The implication is either forgotten, or it is toned down to something like: 'Women are mistreated in the West, but not as much as in Muslim cultures'. Nevertheless, the juxtapositions do indicate some characteristics of Islamophobia, which are expressed systematically as eight main features of what are called 'closed views of Islam':

1. Islam seen as a single monolithic bloc, static and unresponsive to new realities.

2. Islam seen as separate and other—(a) not having any aims or values in common with other cultures (b) not affected by them (c) not influencing them.
3. Islam seen as inferior to the West—barbaric, irrational, primitive, sexist.
4. Islam seen as violent, aggressive, threatening, supportive of terrorism, engaged in a ‘clash of civilisations’.
5. Islam seen as a political ideology, used for political or military advantage.
6. Criticisms made by Islam of ‘the West’ rejected out of hand.
7. Hostility towards Islam used to justify discriminatory practices towards Muslims and exclusion of Muslims from mainstream society.
8. Anti-Muslim hostility accepted as natural and ‘normal’ (Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia 1997b: 5).

These are intended to distinguish Islamophobia from legitimate debate, disagreement and criticism of Islam. Disagreement with the theological principles of Islam does not in itself constitute Islamophobia, nor does criticism of what some Muslims perceive to be the cultural and political consequences of Islam. This is an important point as it distinguishes Islamophobia from racism—the concept of legitimate debate with a racialised group hardly makes sense (though disagreement with the dynamic of racialisation does).

It should be noted that some features of this ‘closed view of Islam’ are also characteristic of what Aziz Al-Azmeh (1996) calls ‘neo-Afghanistan’, a Muslim discourse which is explicitly linked to ‘Islamic fundamentalism’. For example, in such discourse, Islam is perceived to be monolithic, static, unresponsive and separate, and any deviation from this is regarded as *bid’a* (literally ‘innovation’, with connotations of heresy). In

other words, it is concerned with a 'pure' and 'authentic' Islam. Criticisms of this 'closed view of Islam' are not necessarily Islamophobic. Indeed, they are often made by other Muslims, Al-Azmech among them.

Nevertheless, it is profitable to conceptualise Islamophobia in terms of internal Orientalism, as defined in section 2.3. While, as was argued, some Muslims in the West are valued according to what they have in common with the West, others, who decide to withdraw, are perceived as negating Western values, and even civilisation itself. They are seen as fundamentalist, a label which connects the wearing of the *hijab* to Western images of Islam-inspired fanaticism and terrorism. Thus, the perception of Islam as being radically incompatible with Western, 'civilised' values is reinforced. When classical Orientalism alleged an incompatibility between Islam and the West, Muslims were seen as a somewhat exotic people, this perception forming part of the sensual stereotype referred to above. But where this view is seen in a context of internal Orientalism, the perception of Islam changes. According to the Runnymede Trust's consultation paper, which preceded the report on Islamophobia:

In the case of the new coining 'islamophobia', both kinds of dread are implied: the object of fear is both out there, beyond national boundaries, and also here, all too close to home. Precisely because Islam is perceived to have this dual location it is all the more feared and disliked by many non-Muslims. Recurring metaphors to refer to Muslim communities within Europe include fifth column, bridgehead, enclave, trojan horse and enemy within (Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia 1997a: 6).

As I argued in section 2.3, the intermediate option for Muslims to respond to internal Orientalism, a combined Western-Muslim identity, can also be used to reinforce internal Orientalist stereotypes. It can be seen as contradictory and irrational, or it can be supposed that there must be something behind the combined identity, whether it be a barrier against the West or an attempt to infiltrate the West. A classic statement of this perception is cited in the Runnymede report:

You can be British without speaking English or being Christian or being white, but nevertheless Britain is basically English-speaking, Christian and white, and if one starts to think that it might become basically Urdu-speaking and Muslim and brown, one gets frightened and angry.... Because of our obstinate refusal to have enough babies, Western European civilisation will start to die at the point where it could have been revived with new blood. Then the hooded hordes will win, and the Koran will be taught, as Gibbon famously imagined, in the schools of Oxford (Moore 1991; cited in Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia 1997b: 9).

3.3. Examples of Islamophobic discourse

Another qualification which must be added to the statements about the Islamophobic perceptions of Muslim culture as inferior to Western culture, and the 'closed views of Islam', is that the systematic nature of their expression means that they are also somewhat general, and aloof from the empirical situations in which Islamophobia is really expressed. In order to compliment that approach, I would like to continue from Charles Moore's quotation, to examine some other specific, empirical,

concrete examples of Islamophobic discourse. These will help us to understand the diversity of Islamophobia, and the possibilities for international comparisons.

In October 1995, members of the *Groupe Islamo-Chrétien du Hautmont-Mouvaux*, near Lille, with whom I did an important amount of fieldwork, received a hand-written note in the post. It read as follows:

Centre anti-islamique de Lambersart

96 rue de l'abbé Lemire

59130 Lambersart

Le coran est un tissu d'inepties, une hérésie complète. L'islam est une religion de déséquilibre. Seul l'évangile est source de véritées [sic].

Madame Raimonde Debeir, 96 rue de l'abbé Lemire à Lambersart offre une prime de 1000.00 francs à un islamiste si il se converti à l'évangile. Qu'on se le disc!³²

One way in which Islamophobia is expressed is by claiming that Islam is inferior to other religions or worldviews, in this case Christianity. So the particularity of this example of Islamophobic discourse lies in its motivation, which is clearly religious. However, it is not uncommon for people to think that their own religion or worldview is superior to others—in many cases, this is why people have a particular religion or worldview, and this would constitute a legitimate disagreement with Islam, not Islamophobia *per se*. Clearly, it would not be useful to say that believing strongly in something other than Islam constitutes Islamophobia. But here, there is an *explicit*

³² This letter has a number of errors in spelling and grammar, but I have reproduced it as written. I have translated it as follows: 'Anti-Islamic centre of Lambersart, 96 rue de l'abbé Lemire, 59130 Lambersart. The Qur'an is a web of absurdity, a complete heresy. Islam is a religion of imbalance. Only the Gospel is the source of truths. Mrs Raimonde Debeir, 96 rue de l'abbé Lemire in Lambersart, offers a reward of 1,000 francs to an Islamist if he converts to the Gospel. May someone tell him!'

attempt to *denigrate Islam in particular*, presumably because the writer feels that Islam constitutes a significant threat to Christianity. This belief comes from a particular understanding of contemporary socio-political realities, not from theological conviction, which is why it does seem to cross the line between a legitimate criticism of Islam and a religiously-motivated Islamophobia.

If further evidence for this analysis is needed, the writer claims that the Gospel is the only source of truth, leading to the logical (in terms of her argument) conclusion that Islam, like other religions, is mistaken. So far, her argument is theological, not Islamophobic. However, she does not stop there. She also claims that Islam, in particular, is characterised by absurdity, heresy, and mental instability. In addition, the bounty of one thousand francs is offered to an 'Islamist', rather than a 'Muslim'. This is probably an unconscious confusion of the two terms, but the common association of 'Islamist' with 'terrorist' is still invoked here, and this plays on people's fears, undermining attempts of Muslims and Christians (to whom the letter was sent) to achieve a mutual understanding.

This common association, between Islam and terrorism, exists throughout the West, though it seems to be expressed and analysed in a particularly lucid way in France. This is undoubtedly due to the history of French colonialism, the contemporary politics of immigration, and the civil war in Algeria. The classic example of this '*Islamalgam*', as it has come to be known (from a combination of the French words for 'Islam' and 'amalgam'), must be the headline which appeared in *France-Soir* six days after the bombing of the Port-Royal RER station in Paris on 3 December 1996. It read: '*37 Beurs jugés: Le procès des commandos du Maroc s'ouvre à Paris, 6 jours après l'attentat du RER*'.³³ This headline said a great deal in the way in which it mixed issues of nationality,

³³ '*37 Beurs judged: The trial of the Moroccan commandos opens in Paris, 6 days after the RER bomb attack*' (front-page headline in *France-Soir*, 9.12.96). *Beur* is a slang expression for the children, born

immigration, urban 'social problems', terrorism in France, armed conflict in Morocco, and the fear of 'Islamic fundamentalism'. In the popular imagination, the *Beurs* are associated with the *banlieues* (large peripheral estates of major cities), with overtones of social deprivation, unemployment, crime, drugs, and violence, and these same *banlieues* are perceived as fertile recruitment ground for the preachers of an '*Islam de rupture*' (see Aziz 1996). In addition, their nationality is an issue of struggle: they were born in France, of North African origin, which illustrates the conflict between *jus solis* and *jus sanguinis* principles of nationality, and the fear (exploited by the *Front National*) of immigration. The article was about the trial of a group of *Beurs* for terrorist offences in Morocco, which had nothing to do with the RER bomb attack to which the headline refers. However, the assumption that the RER attack was the work of 'Islamic fundamentalists', and the perception that conflict in North Africa (which itself conflates the quite different situations in Algeria and Morocco) is solely or mainly about 'Islamic fundamentalism', were grounds for putting the two together. The use of the words '*Beurs*', '*commandos du Maroc*' and '*l'attentat du RER*' indicates a fear of fundamentalism, violence, and cultural incompatibility, and the danger of 'their problems' being exported 'over here' as a result of migration.

There is a direct connection between such Islamophobic, or 'Islamalgamic', discourse, and the anti-immigration racism of the *Front National*, or, by extension, the extreme right in other European countries. However, there is no clear expression of racism in Madame Debeir's letter, nor is there a direct attack on Muslims, as opposed to Islam. To give the writer the benefit of the doubt, she is making a point similar to that made by Fay Weldon, in her response to the Runnymede Trust document which accused

in France, of migrants from North Africa, coined by the *Beurs* themselves as an alternative to the pejorative, even racist, *raton* or *melon*.

her of Islamophobia. An article by Graham Ball in *The Independent on Sunday* reported her reaction as follows:

In 1989, soon after the Ayatollah Khomeini declared a *fatwa* against Salman Rushdie for writing *The Satanic Verses*, Fay Weldon published *Sacred Cows*, a pamphlet critical of the fundamentalist interpretation of the Koran. The authors of the pamphlet say that her writing helped to demonise Islam and they quote the following passage: '[The Koran is] food for no thought. It is not a poem on which society can be safely or sensibly based. It gives weapons and strength to the thought police'.... 'The piece they quote seems to be a perfectly valid comment to make about either the Bible or Koran. I feel outraged and besmirched that these peaceful and apt words have been used in this way', Ms. Weldon said.... 'Are they seriously arguing that Islamophobia is the same as racism? Officially Britain is a Christian culture—who goes to church these days? I say hooray for Muslims and down with Islam. The mullahs have done everyone a great disservice', she said.³⁴

It seems from this that we should recognise two kinds of Islamophobia: a hostility to Islam which becomes a hostility towards Muslims; and a hostility towards Islam without hostility towards Muslims. In principle, it may be more helpful to use the term Islamophobia to denote hostility towards Islam, and Modood's earlier term Muslim-phobia to denote hostility towards Muslims. However, Islamophobia appears to be the term we are stuck with, and it does have the virtue of indicating that there is a degree of fluidity between hostility towards Islam and hostility towards Muslims. Furthermore, it

³⁴ *The Independent on Sunday*, 2.3.97, p.10.

may not be useful to use the label 'Islamophobia' to represent hostility towards Islam without hostility towards Muslims. This is because there seems to be a danger of 'conceptual inflation' (to use Robert Miles's term), which leads to such a broad definition of Islamophobia that it becomes difficult to subject it to critique. The first kind, which is clearly Islamophobic, seems to have more in common with racism, because it is directed against people, rather than against an idea.

In some cases, there is a common expression of racism and Islamophobia, in which the conceptual distinction is not reflected in the actual discourse. For example, one Danish group has published material on the internet, which is cited here because it is a particularly vivid example of a more widespread discourse:

Why could a World religion like Islam be invented in the poor desert part of the Middle East? Why not in the more densely populated Egypt or Iraq or Iran? Perhaps because the barbarian populations have some unspoiled quality, that makes them open to new chances. Mohammed took in what was fitting his people from Jew-dom, Christianity and Mongolian warfare.³⁵

Our democratic and enlightened aristocratic tradition makes us advanced and valuable people to the world. We have little to learn and much to lose by mixing our people with what may be environmental (not genetic) half-apes.³⁶

The 'black school' we call the old church school where rote-learning was top priority. We support Moslem schools which are worse—learning the Koran in a dead Arab language. We should use less money on the immigrants and it should aim at integration, not aim at supporting their crusade against us.³⁷

³⁵ <http://www.glistrup.com/desert.htm>

³⁶ <http://www.glistrup.com/osmanic.htm>

³⁷ <http://www.glistrup.com/koran.htm>

The particularity of such discourse lies in the explicit mixing of racism and Islamophobia.³⁸ The first one characterises Muslims as inferior and backward, but with a ‘noble savage’ quality. The second statement adds to this that Muslims and Westerners are incompatible, thus adding to the inferior stereotype a programme of isolation, a kind of racist quarantine rather than apartheid (and a clear example of Taguieff’s *racisme différentialiste*). The third statement adds to this a perception that the inferior and incompatible Other is constituting a direct threat to ‘us’. This is an extreme example insofar as it mixes racism and Islamophobia in such an explicit way, but different parts of the statements cited can be found in a variety of different places.

This section has contributed to the analysis of Islamophobia by identifying different examples of how it is expressed. It is expressed in religious terms, with the claim that Islam in particular is inferior to other religions or worldviews. It is expressed by associating Islam and terrorism, and in this way there is a comparison between Islamophobia and the French concept of an ‘*Islamalgame*’. It is expressed as hostility towards Islam and as hostility towards Muslims, though there are legitimate doubts about whether hostility towards Islam *per se* is usefully referred to as Islamophobia. It is expressed in the context of racism and anti-immigrant sentiment, in discourses of Muslims as inferior and backward, as incompatible with, or a danger to, the Western countries in which they are perceived as ‘immigrants’. By identifying these expressions, this chapter has highlighted the complexity and diversity of Islamophobia, further showing (in answer to the first central question of this thesis) that there are diverse expressions of Islam as fundamentally different from the West, and as homogeneous or even inferior.

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³⁸ I have not discovered any examples from the United Kingdom or France which are anywhere near as explicit, though I have no reason to believe they do not exist.

3.4. Comparative issues

The different types of Islamophobia which have been identified in section 3.3, and this highlighting of diversity, also demonstrate that there are possibilities for comparison between different countries, as well as between Islamophobia and racism. As such, it is particularly relevant to this thesis. The fear or hatred of Muslims is expressed through a variety of discourses, some of which are specific to one country, while others exist across Europe.

One specific comparison which has been cited in this chapter is between Islamophobia in the United Kingdom and the '*Islamalgame*' in France. There is a clear difference between these two concepts in that the *Islamalgame* refers to a *discourse* which portrays all Muslims as homogenous and responsible for the actions of a few. The concept of Islamophobia refers to *practices* as well as discourses, and reflects a consciousness of Muslims being confronted with antipathy or hatred rather than a homogenising discourse (though the homogenising discourse is often present). As we would expect, based on the arguments in section 2.5, there is an emphasis, in France, on the discursive power (a form of cultural power, dependent on cultural capital) to label, define and characterise the religious group. This reflects the French use of culture to explain religion. In the United Kingdom, there is a consciousness of an expressed antipathy which creates disadvantage, and this has its roots in discourses which explain cultural practices, and acts of terrorism, in terms of the Islamic religion ('they do these things because they are Muslims'). Such discourse is also expressed by critics of Islamophobia, by pointing to the cultural enrichment which is brought to British society by the presence of Islam, and reflects the British use of religion to explain culture. The

comparison between Islamophobia and the '*Islamalgame*' is discussed further in section 4.6.

Issues which are relevant across Europe include the place of Islam in state education, and political discourse about integration (or multiculturalism). The Danish group, cited above, certainly linked the two. Jørgen Nielsen (1995b: 158) has argued that the educational sphere is a major arena in which such representations of Islam are developed. Comparing the Rushdie affair and the *affaire du foulard*, he writes:

The 'affairs' exposed tensions between ideological secularists in the political and cultural establishments of Europe, the bearers of the culture of the nation state, and those who saw religion as having an active and critical role to play in public life. Above all, issues of the education of children were central: were they to be educated into a national culture, or did parents have the right to determine the nature of their children's education?

On the politics of integration, Christopher Husbands (1995) addresses 'the issue of Muslim assimilability and Muslim responses to it' in Britain, France and the Netherlands, and suggests that there is a connection between Islamophobic discourse and the extent of 'moral panics' about the national identity of the country in question. This may account partly for the lesser consciousness of Islamophobia in France. There is no suggestion that this connection is a direct correlation; nevertheless, a strong connection between the two phenomena may be a heuristic hypothesis with which to begin comparative research on the relationship between racism and Islamophobia.

In order to compare racism and Islamophobia—systematise a conceptualisation of what they have in common, where they influence and constitute each other, and where

they must be kept conceptually separate -we shall identify and classify the diverse definitions of racism. Michel Wieviorka (1995: 37) makes a useful distinction between three dimensions, or referents, of the term 'racism', which can be paraphrased as: (i) prejudices, opinions and attitudes; (ii) behaviours and practices of discrimination, segregation and violence; and (iii) racism as a cognitive doctrine, public discourse or political ideology. Social scientific definitions of racism tend to take the third dimension as a starting point, so racism is essentially an ideology which *manifests* itself in political programmes, exclusionary practices, violence, or prejudice. Even then, there is no real consensus about how the ideology of racism should be defined, and the debates of the 1980s, though they may have become stale, remain unresolved. So racism may be an ideology which holds that human beings are separated by somatic ('racial') criteria into different groups ('races'), and which implies a negative judgement about one or more of these groups. Racism may be an ideology which holds different groups to be incompatible, even if they are culturally defined and, in theory, equal. Or racism may be an ideology which takes social and historical processes, and assumes that they are biological givens. These three views are associated with Robert Miles (1989), Pierre-André Taguieff (1987), and Martin Barker (1981), respectively.

Perhaps part of the problem is the chameleon-like nature of racism. It is capable of changing its appearance, while retaining the same essence. The problem is exacerbated by the appearance of racism being more than superficial. Taguieff's vicious circle of racism and antiracism should alert us to this. There is a vicious circle of heterophobic and heterophilic racisms and antiracisms. This begins with a heterophobic racism, a hatred of the Other, which is confronted by a heterophilic antiracism, or appreciation of the Other. This is taken on board by a heterophilic racism, an apparent appreciation of the Other which is in fact an appreciation of Otherness and a determination to maintain

this Otherness (the theoretical basis of *apartheid*), which is again confronted with a heterophobic antiracism, a rejection of Otherness and insistence on universality (which is what has instigated elements of the anti-racist left in France to support *assimilation*). The circle is completed by a heterophobic racism which objects to anything which is different or Other and threatens to undermine this principle of universality (Taguieff 1987: 409-10).

I have already defined Islamophobia as religious prejudice. In one sense, it is narrower than this definition would suggest, because it refers solely to prejudice against Muslims. In another sense, it is broader, because it can refer to more than prejudice. The Runnymede Trust define it as 'referring to dread or hatred of Islam—and, therefore, to fear or dislike of all or most Muslims' (Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia 1997b: 1). They identify four separate, but overlapping, interconnected and mutually reinforcing aspects of Islamophobia (though it should be emphasised that *causal* relations cannot be taken for granted): prejudice, discrimination, exclusion and violence. Prejudice is expressed in everyday conversation and in the media. Discrimination exists in the provision of services, notably education and health, and in employment practices. Exclusion from employment occurs, also from politics and government, and from management and responsibility. Finally, Muslims are subject to violence, in the forms of verbal abuse, vandalising of property, and physical assaults (Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia 1997b: 11-12).

There are three aspects of this definition which allow us to compare it with our definitions of racism. Firstly, Islamophobia is defined *primarily* as a hostility towards Islam, rather than Muslims, though it must manifest itself (secondarily) as hostility towards Muslims. The thing to note is that hostility towards Muslims is strictly secondary. Thus, although Islamophobia is not defined as *being* an ideology, it is

defined *in terms of ideology, or with reference to ideology*, as is racism. In other words, Islamophobia is defined as being in opposition to an ideology, whereas racism is defined as being an ideology in its own right.

Secondly, the different aspects of Islamophobia mirror two of Wiewiorka's dimensions of racism: prejudices, opinions and attitudes; and behaviours and practices of discrimination, segregation and violence. However, there is no mention of Islamophobia as cognitive doctrine, public discourse or political ideology. On the other hand, this does not mean that such an ideology does not exist, though it is difficult to say where it exists, or who articulates such an ideology.

Thirdly, it is theoretically possible to conceptualise Islamophobia in terms of Taguieff's vicious circle. This starts with a (heterophobic) Islamophobia, or a hatred of the Muslim Other. A heterophilic critique of Islamophobia, like the Rumymede report, emerges in response to this. Such a critique 'acknowledges that Islam is distinctively different in significant respects from other religions and "the West", but does not see it as deficient or as less worthy of esteem', and argues that Islamophobia 'prevents non-Muslims from appreciating and benefiting from Islam's cultural, artistic and intellectual heritage, and from its moral teachings' (Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia 1997b: 6, 12). This, in turn, reinforces a kind of heterophilic Islamophobia (though this term is an oxymoron, so 'heterophilic Orientalism' may be preferable), which values the Otherness of Islam and of Muslims, seeks to maintain this Otherness, and exclude the constituted Other from consideration as 'one of us'. Finally, the critical response to this, seen, for example, in Edward Said's work, is one which rejects this principle of Otherness, shows it to be a social construction rather than a natural or quasi-natural division between human beings, and emphasises the heterogeneity of Muslim and Western cultures.

3.5. Conclusion

We have seen that racism and Islamophobia have in common certain aspects of their definitions and expressions, though their origins are more complicated. We can say that they both originate from representations of the Other, but so do other forms of prejudice, such as sexism or homophobia. Among those things which racism and Islamophobia have in common are: (i) that they are both defined primarily with reference to ideology; (ii) that they are both constituted by prejudices, opinions and attitudes, and by behaviours and practices of discrimination, segregation and violence; and (iii) that they can both be conceptualised in terms of a vicious circle of heterophobia and heterophilia.

The most obvious answer to the question of how racism and Islamophobia influence and constitute each other, as we have seen in this chapter, is that 'Muslims' have been subject to racialisation. What happens here is that another criterion of difference is added on to the religious criterion to emphasise the perceived incompatibility between 'white', 'Christian', 'European' Westerners and 'Muslims', as also happened in the development of antisemitism. Yet this is not a dominant discourse of Islamophobia, except perhaps in the United Kingdom (because in British Orientalism, religion was used to explain culture, rather than *vice-versa*). In any case, the religious criterion can also be added on to the 'racial' one, and this is something which happens increasingly. In some ways, it seems as if the medieval image of the 'Moor' or 'Saracen' was more racialised than the contemporary stereotype of the fanatical, misogynistic terrorist who quotes the Qur'an in support of authoritarianism and violence.

This chapter has isolated an effect of the perception of a West-Islam dualism, homogeneity of Islam and homogeneity of the West, which is referred to as

Islamophobia, and shown that the religious character of the Muslim communities in the West is a pretext for a form of prejudice and discrimination which is distinct from racism. Many of the stereotypes involved in this process, which have been discussed in this chapter, can also be found in media discourses, and so the next chapter analyses media representations of Islam in greater detail and diversity.

4. Media representations of Islam

4.1. Introduction and context

In earlier chapters of this thesis, I argued that the critique of Orientalism entails a moving away from 'Occidental' discourses. These discourses represent the West as homogeneous in the way it represents Islam, and maintain the subject-object dualism of the West and Islam by reducing Islam to a passive victim of Orientalism. We need to move towards a theory of interaction between Islam and the West, between Orientalism and Occidentalism, and between Muslim identities and Western representations of Islam and Muslims. In this chapter, I show that Western representations of Islam and Muslims are diverse and fluid, by referring to empirical data which was collected during my fieldwork in Lille and Glasgow. The emphasis in this chapter is on written representations of Islam, particularly media sources dating back to the 1970s, showing that they exist within a context which also includes academic, political and popular discourses, historical and structural circumstances. The reasons for focusing on media discourses are that they are accessible, they are a part of people's lives, which helps to make them particularly influential, they can be seen as occupying a 'middle ground' between popular 'commonsense' discourses on the one hand, and political or academic discourses on the other, and the media gives a tangible reflection of popular discourses. There is a focus on 'quality' newspapers which are politically centrist or left-wing, as it would be easy to find sensationalised material on virtually anything in the United

Kingdom tabloids, and because these newspapers are more amenable to comparison (there being no real French equivalent of the tabloids, when we consider their populism *and* influence).

Although this chapter identifies similarities and differences between French and British representations of Islam, the main thrust is to identify the differences. Furthermore, it identifies some differences between media and other discourses, enabling us to situate the material more clearly, and to recognise the diversity of representations which exist. I have placed a major emphasis on the paradigm shift, which was identified in Chapter 2, from an exotic to a fanatical stereotype of Islam. Clearly, it is not the intention to identify long term trends in Orientalist discourse by examining a limited number of texts with a qualitative method. Such an approach would be methodologically untenable. However, the texts do illustrate other points which arise from our historical and theoretical discussions, and the approach is consistent with an attempt to identify the diversity of representations of Islam. This is because paradigm shifts do not always entail the disappearance of the previous paradigm, but the two (or more) paradigms can continue to co-exist, even if they are in some kind of conflict with each other. This point will become clearer when the specific example is discussed.

The structure of this chapter is as follows. To begin with, it looks at the exotic representation of Islam and Muslims in earlier and current discourses. Then, the shift from exoticism to fanaticism is discussed in terms of some important events (an approach which is borrowed from two French doctoral theses, by Elghazi 1990 and Salem 1994), such as the Rushdie affair, and the development of a media focus on terrorism. A not unrelated image is that of Muslims as socially delinquent, the discussion of which ensues from that of the fanatical stereotype. The chapter emphasises that these discourses have an effect on the situations of Muslims, the nature of extreme-right politics, and the

development of nationality and immigration laws. Then, I make a point which follows from Chapter 3, as well as this chapter, which is that there are media discourses which are more critical of homogenising representations of Islam and Muslims. This raises the possibility of an emergent critique of Islamophobia, which goes beyond the exotic and fanatical representations and takes account of the principles of a critique of Orientalism. Finally, I discuss some of the issues involved in a comparative perspective. It should be noted that this chapter does not examine the educational sphere, although it is a subject of frequent media debate, and also an important site of socialisation in which the younger generation of Muslims can experience a tension or reconciliation of Muslim and Western cultures. This is discussed, with some reference to media material, in Chapter 8.

Before addressing these subjects, it is important to emphasise that there is a wider international context to this discussion, which can be identified with the political discourse to which I have referred, and which has differing impacts on French and British discourses. For example, the current state of relations (as I am writing) between the American-British axis and Iraq has the clear potential to develop into a wider conflict between the West and the Arab-Muslim world. Such possibilities have been identified in Samuel Huntington's (1993) infamous self-fulfilling prophecy known as the clash of civilisations. He has argued that the most significant line of confrontation may be 'the cultural division of Europe between Western Christianity, on the one hand, and Orthodox Christianity and Islam, on the other' (Huntington 1993: 29-30), as it was at the time of the Great Schism, in 1054, and the First Crusade, which began in 1096. Not only is this a line of conflict, but Huntington is clear about whose fault he thinks it is: the clash of civilisations is 'the perhaps irrational but surely historic reaction of an ancient rival against our Judeo-Christian heritage, our secular present, and the world-wide

expansion of both' (Huntington 1993: 32). Furthermore, he sometimes seems to blame the victims:

... the proliferation of ethnic conflict, epitomized at the extreme in 'ethnic cleansing', has not been totally random. It has been most frequent and most violent between groups belonging to different civilizations. In Eurasia the great historic fault lines between civilizations are once more aflame. This is particularly true along the boundaries of the crescent-shaped Islamic bloc of nations from the bulge of Africa to central Asia. Violence also occurs between Muslims, on the one hand, and Orthodox Serbs in the Balkans, Jews in Israel, Hindus in India, Buddhists in Burma and Catholics in the Philippines. Islam has bloody borders (Huntington 1993: 34-5).

Huntington is not unique in propagating this sort of discourse, though I suspect he has had a particularly strong influence on Western policies and, by extension, on current affairs. But the international context is frequently cited in media discourse; other examples include Palestine, the Taleban in Afghanistan, and the Chechen conflict. French newspapers have tended to be supportive of the Palestinian cause, and acts of violence committed against Israelis have been attributed to 'Islamists' rather than 'Palestinians'.³⁹ As I argued in the introduction to this thesis, there has been a shift in British media and academic discourses from references to 'Asians' or 'Pakistanis' to references to 'Muslims', and this can be attributed *partially* to the international context (for example the involvement of Iran in the Rushdie affair).

³⁹ See, for example, the article by Christophe Boltanski in *Libération*, 12.12.96, p.8.

Similarly, the civil war in Algeria is never far from French concerns. Although it has been reported world-wide, there are obvious reasons why it should be particularly prominent in France: the population of Algerian origin in France; the colonial link; the continuing implication of France in North African politics. As a result, reporting on Algeria has been more in-depth, but it has also provoked a *particular* representation of Muslims in France as linked to terrorism, which has a negative influence on the *situations* of Muslims in France. Similarly, as we shall see, discourses such as Huntington's have had an effect on the representations and situations of Muslims in Britain, and no doubt in the rest of the English-speaking world.

4.2. Exoticism

A 1975 article in a local newspaper from Lille described the Wazemmes market, then and now an important location in the economic and social life of many Muslims of North African origin in the Lille area, in the following terms:

Les Nord-Africains, très nombreux ont apporté les teintés crues, parfois criardes de leurs tapis et de leurs couvertures, des sacs en cuir, des chapeaux de peau. Les femmes drapées dans leurs gandouras s'embrassent en riant; les hommes en djellaba, la chéchia en tricot foulée sur la tête, se serrent la main, la portent ensuite au cœur: «Salamalco». Ils ont amené la menthe fraîche pour le thé, qui sent bon dans les travées. Sur les étaux on trouve les pastèques, rouges et juteuses dans leurs gangues vertes; des merguez côté boucherie; des beignets, des loukoums côté pâtisserie. Wazemmes, c'est le bazar. On y retrouve, comme à Istanbul, les narghilés (ces pipes au long tuyau souple

communiquant avec un flacon d'eau aromatisée), les cuivres jaunes, les odeurs d'encens des petits camelots, les senteurs fortes des épices. Des noirs, vendeurs de sagaies, de masques, d'amulettes appellent le client au son de petits tam-tams; les boules de bois frappent inlassablement la membrane tendue. D'autres fruits exotiques: ananas, noix de cocos, des dattes, des avocats évoquent une autre Afrique.⁴⁰

The exotic tone of this article is quite apparent, but when it is analysed, we may have a clearer idea of *why* it seems exotic. The use of Arabic and Turkish words certainly contributes to this, as does the frequent use of certain adjectives which inevitably has an evocative effect on a text. There are also some less obvious factors. If we analyse the text, we find that the article is structured by a number of oppositions, which are set out in Table 4.1, and these create a juxtaposition of the North Africans and the 'black people', the gravity of the men compared with the gaiety of the women, and aspects of the visual and olfactory experiences of being there. These serve as a context for the additional juxtapositions of the 'familiar' and the 'exotic', set out in Table 4.2, and it is the familiarity of one part which emphasises the exoticism (to the assumed Western reader) of another part.

Even now, in the late 1990s, it seems impossible for a non-Muslim Westerner to escape fully from the idea of Muslim exoticism. If I may be reflexive for a moment,

⁴⁰ 'The many North Africans have brought the glaring, sometimes gaudy colours of their rugs and blankets, leather bags, hats made from skin. The women clothed in their *gandouras* kiss each other and laugh; the men in *jellaba*, their knitted *chéchias* pressed onto their heads, shake hands, bringing them straight to the heart: "*Salamalec*". They have brought fresh mint for making tea, which smells good in the stalls. On the tables can be found watermelons, red and juicy in their green crusts; *merguez* at the butcher's stall; fritters and Turkish delight at the *patisserie*. Wazemmes is a chaotic bazaar. Like in Istanbul, narghiles (those pipes with a long, flexible tube joined to a flask of aromatic water), articles made from brass, the smell of incense from the street peddlers, and the strong scent of spices can all be found. A few black people, sellers of spears, masks and amulets, call to their customers with the sound of little tam-tams; wooden bowls strike the stretched membrane without tiring. Other exotic fruits: pineapple, coconut, dates and avocados evoke another Africa' (*La Voix du Nord*, 27.7.75).

Nord-Africains	noirs
<i>Les Nord-Africains, très nombreux</i>	<i>Des noirs</i>
femmes	hommes
gandouras	djellaba
drapées	foulées
s'embrassent	se serrent la main
en riant	«Salamalec»
travées	étaux
rouges	vertes
boucherie	pâtisserie
aromatisée, odeurs d'encens	senteurs fortes

Table 4.1: Oppositions in article on Wazemmes market
(see footnotes for translations)

<u>Familiar</u>	<u>Exotic</u>
tapis, couvertures, sacs en cuir	chapeaux de peau
femmes	gandouras
hommes	djellaba, chéchia
se serrent la main	la portent ensuite au cœur
la menthe fraîche	la menthe fraîche <i>pour le thé</i>
boucherie	merguez
pâtisserie	loukoums
Wazemmes	Istanbul
fruits	exotiques

Table 4.2: Familiar/exotic juxtapositions in article on Wazemmes market
(see footnotes for translations)

when I did my fieldwork in Lille, I lived in the district of Wazemmes, just a few hundred yards away from the market, and my own initial impression was that it seemed quite exotic. I was struck by the North African clothing (worn by some people, and on sale), the music, food (merguez sausages, olives), Islamic bookstalls, and so on. These were not only my impressions. Local people, some with a knowledge and experience of Muslim culture and the Muslim communities in France, had the same impression. Alain,⁴¹ a social worker who works with homeless people, many of whom are of North African Muslim origin, and who deliberately chose to live near the *Lille Sud* mosque, where many of Lille's Muslims also live, told me that the Wazemmes market, the *rue de Marquillies* (where the *Lille Sud* mosque is found), and some districts of Marseilles, felt like being in a Muslim country.

I tried to test some of my impressions by mapping the geographical locations of mosques, 'halal' butchers, other Muslim-owned businesses catering specifically for Muslims (such as tea rooms and cafés, Islamic bookshops, and Muslim undertakers), and the 'Muslim culture industry' (that is, restaurants and businesses which seek to sell commodities associated with Muslim countries to French 'non-Muslims') in Wazemmes. This is expounded in more detail in section 6.4. What is of relevance here is that the public image of the exotic stereotype seems to have continued, to some extent, in the culture industry, which implies that stereotypical images of Islam and Muslims come to the fore in areas where Muslim and 'non-Muslims' have the most contact. As a result, it is not surprising that journalistic discourse about 'Muslim culture' contained a mixture of familiar Orientalist stereotypes, a concern with 'authentic' Muslim culture, and an emphasis on the political significance of 'immigrant culture' in France. I collected a wide

⁴¹ Unless otherwise stated, the names of subjects in my research are pseudonyms. In Tables 1.1 and 1.2, I have included details of occupation, national status, place of residence, religious affiliation (unless the respondent was a practising Muslim), gender, and the means by which I gathered information from them.

range of documentation concerned with 'Muslim culture' (art, literature, film, theatre, music, gastronomy) in France. Some could be said to show that such culture exists in its own right, and is equal with Western culture, while others seemed to be based on stereotypes of the Orient. To give a couple of examples, one restaurant advertised itself as being '*dans un cadre typiquement oriental*' (in a typically Oriental setting), while one series of concerts and dance was entitled '*Les nuits d'Orient*' (Oriental nights). The latter, however, included a debate entitled '*Orient/Occident, la culture partagée?*' (Orient/Occident, sharing of culture?), which showed some degree of critique of the Orientalist stereotypes.

The existence of such critique highlights the necessity of the above article being seen as part of a 'struggle' between the exotic and fanatical representations, and this is a point which is common to France and the United Kingdom. In 1975, when it was written, the paradigm shift was well underway, so there is a sense in which the exotic representation can be seen as a negation of the fanatical one. This is a very important point, which shows that the article cannot be seen simply as a negative portrayal of Muslims. In fact, there is no reference to Muslims at all, but rather to North Africans. This focus on nationality or ethnicity, rather than religion, is typical of discourse throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s. It was only during the Rushdie affair that academic discourse in the United Kingdom switched its focus from 'Asians' or 'Pakistanis' to 'Muslims' (compare, for example, articles by Pnina Werbner 1979, 1980, 1981, 1987, 1991, 1996). I discuss this point in the next section, and it provides a point of comparison between the United Kingdom and France.

While doing my research in Lille, I looked at some press dossiers in the public library, containing press cuttings from as far back as 1972, which make it possible to recognise some trends which were part of the paradigm shift. A consideration of a few

examples from these dossiers will help us to further understand the paradigm shift, or 'struggle' between the exotic and fanatical representations. Where Islam was addressed at all in material from the 1970s, as opposed to North African and other 'Muslim' national cultures, it tended to be explanatory in nature, concerned with the religious practice and life of Muslims in France, such as the fast of Ramadhan. An example of this explanatory approach is an article from another local newspaper, *Nord-Matin*, which said that there were more than 100,000 Muslims in the region, and one million in France (making it the second religion). It referred to the donation of a chapel by a Catholic monastic community to the Muslim community in the region (the chapel became the *Mosquée de Lille*). It was pointed out that the chapel was no longer in use, and that its conversion was paid for by the Algerian government—Christian symbols were removed and the Dominican founder's body was exhumed.⁴² In 1975, an article in *La Voix du Nord* showed pictures of the work in progress: the *minbar* (a chair from which the sermon is preached), Arabic calligraphy, and so on. The article focused on the 28 metre minaret, and on the fact that it had taken more than two years to do the work.⁴³ Whatever the relevance of these pieces of information, it is clear that they were concerned with transmitting information and educating their readers about Islam and Muslims in France, and it is possible that they were trying to make Islam and Muslims seem more familiar.

4.3. Fanaticism

As I have indicated, academic discourse in Britain tended to focus on 'Asians' or 'Pakistanis' before the Rushdie affair, after which the focus switched to 'Muslims'.

⁴² *Nord-Matin*, 26.5.72.

⁴³ *La Voix du Nord*, 19.1.75.

Husbands (1995: 117) analyses this in the context of the pre-Rushdie affair period, as follows:

It would be wrong to say that there has never in Britain in the post-war period been a sensitivity to the Muslim presence; in the early days of mass immigration Muslim communities offered a particular focus to those studying immigrant politics because, being a deliberately self-defining group, they presented the possibility of distinctive political behaviour (Le Lohé 1979). However, it would also be true to say that, apart perhaps from certain northern cities such as Bradford and Rochdale where they were especially well represented, they had not been a socially or politically intrusive group.

I am broadly in agreement with Husbands on this, but it is worth examining some of these representations in more concrete detail. When the Rushdie affair began, there was a great deal of reference to Muslims in media discourse, much of which had an air of superiority, as if 'we' in the West were better able to understand principles such as moderation and discretion, which would, hopefully, influence Muslims living in the West. An article in *The Independent*, which I quote at length in order to analyse in detail, read as follows:

If members of Britain's community of some two million Muslims do not want to read Salman Rushdie's novel *The Satanic Verses*, all they have to do is abstain from buying it or taking it out of the local library. They should not seek to impose their feeling about its contents—or, more probably, what they have been told about them—on the rather larger non-Islamic part of the population.

Their campaign to have the book banned, on the grounds that it blasphemes Islam, led to a demonstration over the weekend in Bradford in which, following the example of the Inquisition and Hitler's National Socialists, a large crowd of Muslims burnt some copies of the book.

W.H. Smith, the booksellers, cannot be blamed for following police advice and temporarily withdrawing copies from display in their Bradford shop to avert serious danger to their staff and damages to their premises from the demonstrators. Having come under such pressure, they will have to be all the more careful to do nothing further which might be seen as a surrender to it.

The Islamic campaign would be more understandable if Rushdie's novel were in any way trashy. But its literary merits are not in doubt. Shortly after coming near to winning this year's Booker Prize (which was awarded to Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* in 1981), it won this year's Whitbread literary prize, worth £20,000. It is hardly likely that the worthy and liberal-minded literati who sat on the panels awarding these prizes would have thought so highly of a book which was overtly blasphemous, even of another faith. *The Satanic Verses* was written as a moral parable, and that is how they interpreted it.

It may indeed be thought that Muslims are furnishing material for further moral parables about Islam by attacking Rushdie's fictional creation, not only throughout the Islamic world—it has been banned in the author's native India—but in Britain. Their crusade not just against the book but against Rushdie personally does them no credit.

The Muslim minority has contributed much to the nation's commerce and entrepreneurial spirit. Its members have been notably law-abiding, and their devotion to family values, hard work and personal integrity are rightly admired.

It is important that their spiritual values should be respected, and that they should be spared from racial discrimination in all its forms.

They in turn, however, must not seek to impose their values either on their fellow Britons of other faiths or on the majority who acknowledge no faith at all. Their leaders should examine the implications of their war against the Rushdie novel. Do they really feel this book poses a serious threat to their followers? Is the Islamic faith not strong enough to withstand some controversial fictional analysis? Is their campaign not doubly counter-productive, first, in giving the book so much publicity, and second, in reminding Britons of the intolerant face which Islam has all too often shown abroad? There are enough pressures for censorship in Britain today without religious minorities endeavouring to suppress books which they find controversial or distasteful.⁴⁴

There are a number of statements which are made in this text, and value judgements which are implied. Some are positive, while others are negative, but the positive statements are mostly contained in three sentences, which emphasise the negative or moralistic discourse in the rest of the article (a 'Muslims are good people, but...' discourse). Furthermore, there is no indication that the positive values relate in any way to Islam and its teachings. These statements and implications can be summarised as follows:

⁴⁴ *The Independent*, 16.1.89; reproduced in Appignanesi and Maitland (eds) (1989: 67-9).

Positive statements and implications:

1. Muslims have contributed to commerce and entrepreneurial spirit.
2. They are law-abiding.
3. They have strong family values.
4. They work hard.
5. They possess personal integrity.
6. Their spiritual values are worthy of respect.
7. Muslims should be protected from racism.
8. The 'Islamic faith' is strong.
9. Muslims constitute a community.

Negative statements and implications:

1. Muslims have not read *The Satanic Verses* (and therefore cannot make a judgement about its contents).
2. There are alternative (passive and peaceful) means of protesting.
3. They should not seek to impose their own point of view.
4. There is a hierarchical transmission of information among Muslims.
5. Muslims are in a minority (and therefore should give way to the majority).
6. Their course of action is comparable to the Inquisition and the Nazis.
7. They caused 'serious danger' to people and premises.
8. The campaign was self-defeating (Muslims did not have the acumen to make it work).
9. The 'literati' were 'worthy' and capable of understanding *The Satanic Verses* (the Muslims were not, and were therefore unworthy philistines).

10. The Muslims were confusing the *issue* of the book's publication and the *person* of Salman Rushdie.

11. The Muslim leaders have not really thought about their campaign (therefore it was no more than an emotional, knee-jerk reaction).

12. *The Satanic Verses* is a work of fiction (Muslims were incapable of perceiving this).

13. Islam has frequently shown itself to be intolerant.

14. Islam comes from abroad (so Muslims are outsiders with alien ideas).

Despite the constant reminders that Muslims are in a minority, and therefore should not impose their views on the majority, there are also implications of an Islamic threat. There was a danger to the staff and premises of W.H. Smith from a 'large crowd' who represented 'Britain's community of some *two million* Muslims'. Academic estimates, even the higher ones, indicate that the Muslim population in Britain is presently under 1.5 million, while lower estimates are between one million and 1.2 million (Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia 1997b: 65). But population statistics are never innocent, at least when it come to Muslim populations in Western Europe. Estimates of the Muslim population in France have sometimes gone as high as five million. These tend to come from the extreme right, who want to exaggerate the threat of a 'foreign invasion' turning France into an Islamic state. After Khomeini's *fatwa* calling for Rushdie's death,⁴⁵ Jean-Marie Le Pen was reported in *Le Monde* as saying: 'What Khomeini has just done with revolting cynicism is exactly what I fear for France and Europe, that is the invasion of Europe by a Muslim immigration.'⁴⁶ Ironically, the same

⁴⁵ It should be noted that, contrary to much popular opinion, a *fatwa* is not necessarily a death sentence, but a legal opinion from a suitably qualified Islamic scholar, and the extent to which it confers legal obligations on other Muslims is a matter of debate among experts in Islamic law.

⁴⁶ *Le Monde*, 28.2.89; cited in Appignanesi and Maitland (eds) (1989: 185).

figure of five million has come from some Muslim organisations, principally those who are in contact with the institutions of the French state (one interviewee, Amar Lasfar, who had been a member of the *Conseil de réflexion sur l'islam en France*, or CORIF, set up by the Ministry of the Interior, and who is still an important spokesman for France's Muslims, gave this figure). They also have an interest in supposing a higher figure, as this helps to increase their bargaining power, though it should be noted that the CORIF, and Amar Lasfar in particular, have been very much concerned with developing an *Islam de France*, emphasising *intégration* and the dictum, '*un bon musulman est un bon citoyen*' (a good Muslim is a good citizen).

A more hostile reporting of Islam and the Muslim communities in France seemed to emerge in the aftermath of the Lardjouné/Kerzazi affair, where a girl in Roubaix (near Lille) died after allegedly being made to swallow several litres of salty water as part of a traditional Islamic remedy for epilepsy (though, in reality, there is nothing Islamic about this). There is no evidence that this was part of a long-term paradigm shift, and it seems more likely that it was a short-term shift in emphasis. Nevertheless, short-term media obsessions about Islam can have an impact on public perceptions, and, by extension, on the lives of Muslims. Articles in *Le Monde* reported that two leaders were arrested and questioned for '*torture et actes de barbarie ayant entraîné la mort*' (causing death by torture and barbaric acts). One wonders if the word '*barbarie*' would have been used in other situations. According to one article, Imam Kerzazi was self-proclaimed, which led *Le Monde* to talk about the dangers of self-proclaimed imams and of *communautarisme*,⁴⁷ which refers to communitarianism or multiculturalism, frequently seen as an 'Anglo-Saxon' model which is contrasted with French-style *assimilation*.

⁴⁷ *Le Monde*, 5.7.94; 8.7.94.

When I discussed popular impressions of the exoticism of the Wazemmes market, I pointed out that local 'non-Muslim' French people, some with a knowledge and experience of Muslim culture and the Muslim communities in Lille, had this impression as well. Popular discourses are particularly affected by other discourses, for example, media portrayal of terrorism or delinquency, and political opposition to immigration, and these discourses are mixed with everyday racism and Islamophobia, or with people's own experiences. Charlotte talked of Villeneuve d'Ascq, where she lived and worked as an English language assistant, as a 'rough area' with lots of 'immigrants'. Gilles, an *éducateur spécialisé* (residential social worker) who lived in Lille, said that, according to many Muslims in Wazemmes, the planned bombing of the Wazemmes market in 1995 was to reproach them for not being sufficiently '*intégriste*'.

Articles in one issue of *Le Nouvel Observateur*, in 1989, juxtaposed Khomeini's funeral in Tehran with the establishment of 'Islamist' groups in France. The article '*La Mecque du onzième*' looked at the *mosquée Omar* in Paris (rue Jean-Pierre-Timbaud), a centre for the *Tablighi Jama'at* in France, and argued that, although they should not be confused with dangerous terrorists, they were now the principal Islamic fundamentalist (*fondamentaliste*) organisation in France. Other important Islamist groups were cited as the FNMF (*Fédération nationale des Musulmans de France*), which had Saudi support, *La Voix de l'Islam* for converted intellectuals ('*Elle s'apparente plus à une secte qu'à une confrérie religieuse*'⁴⁸), the *Jam'at al Islami*, the *Ligue Islamique Mondiale*, which controls hundreds of small mosques in France and Europe, the linked Tunisian MTI ('*Les groupes islamistes maghrébins, dont le MTI tunisien est le plus influent, considèrent la*

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⁴⁸ 'It seems more like a cult than a religious brotherhood.'

*France comme un sanctuaire*⁴⁹), and the ‘*chiites intégristes*’ (fundamentalist Shiites), particularly influential among students.⁵⁰

Despite the spectacular tone of this article, there was a reasonable depth of explanation. In 1997, an article by Jon Ronson in *The Guardian* documented the life of the leader of the ‘Islamist’ organisation *Al-Muhajiroun* (which means ‘the emigrants’, those who accompanied the Prophet Muhammad on the *hijra* from Mecca to Medina). The article was based on filming which was done for a television documentary, and was perceptive in parts, for example:

... he requests that we do not film the women members of his organisation....

This is an irritating demand. I am surprised to discover the women to be the most shrewd and articulate of Omar’s followers, tenaciously unafraid to yell at him, and rigidly, astutely, mistrustful of us. This is the antithesis of my perception of Islamic women: I had imagined them to be silent and subservient. And now, by not filming them, we will be unintentionally perpetuating this stereotype.⁵¹

On the other hand, comments in this article about other ‘Islamist’ groups were sometimes partial or even misleading. Hizb-ut-Tahrir was ‘best known for going round university campuses distributing leaflets that preach death to homosexuals’, which reflected popular awareness more than the aims of Hizb-ut-Tahrir, and the Muslim parliament was ‘the representative body for Britain’s Muslim community’, which is

⁴⁹ ‘The North African Islamist groups, of which the Tunisian MTI is the most influential, consider France to be a safe haven.’

⁵⁰ *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 5.10.89, pp.11, 38, 43.

⁵¹ *The Guardian* (weekend supplement), 29.3.97, pp.19-24.

certainly not the case, as there are several bodies which claim to represent Muslims in the United Kingdom.

There is some evidence from material of the 1990s which suggests that the French media has placed more of an emphasis on the alleged problems surrounding Muslim integration in France. These have nevertheless been linked to issues of 'fundamentalism' and 'fanaticism'. It was possible to find an article from *La Voix du Nord* in 1992 which reported that the FIS were holding a public meeting in Roubaix—the newspaper deplored this publicity coup despite writing an article about it, and thus contributing to the publicity.⁵² Reports from a couple of years later, however, suggested that such reticence had disappeared in the local newspapers from the Lille area, and discourse about the 'problems' of 'integration', 'fundamentalism' and 'fanaticism' was much more in evidence. One article referred to a café being vandalised in Roubaix after the owner had put an anti-Islamist poster in his window.⁵³ Articles appeared soon after this one to do with a number of people being expelled from France on the grounds of their alleged Islamist sympathies.⁵⁴ This led to another article on the Islamist movement in the region:

Bien implantée dans la région, la mouvance islamiste s'est développée sous forme de «tentacule» dont l'activité essentielle semble se limiter aujourd'hui à la propagande. Accusée d'être noyautée par les intégristes, la mosquée «Dawa» à Roubaix a renouvelé son équipe.⁵⁵

⁵² *La Voix du Nord*, 30.4.92.

⁵³ *Nord-Eclair*, 19.8.94.

⁵⁴ For example, *Nord-Eclair*, 26.8.94.

⁵⁵ 'Its existence in the region being well consolidated, the Islamist movement has developed itself in the form of a "tentacle" which, today, seems to be limiting its essential activity to propaganda. Accused of being infiltrated by Islamists, the 'Dawa' mosque in Roubaix has renewed its leadership' (*Nord-Eclair*, 8.9.94). The *Dawa* mosque was associated with Imam Kerzazi.

Some Muslims in France have argued that they are represented in the national media by an '*Islamalgam*' of terrorist, Islamist, Muslim, North African, Arab and immigrant. If true, this suggests an intensification and enlargement of the scope of discourse which focused on the alleged problems of integration, and the link with 'fundamentalism' and 'fanaticism'. Not only were these issues being linked together in a way which was clearly detrimental to the image of Muslims in France, but this discourse was being produced on a nation-wide scale with a nation-wide audience. I would argue that the Muslims in France who have argued this point are correct. For example, the bomb in the Port-Royal RER station in Paris on 3 December 1996 produced an enormous amount of journalistic material. While care was taken not to identify the bomb with 'Islamic' or 'Islamist' groups, it only took two days for an article by Franck Johannes to appear in *Libération* speculating about the possible role of the GIA.⁵⁶ At the same time, the front-page headline in *France-Soir*, which was discussed in Chapter 3, appeared. As I suggested, this headline mixed issues of nationality, immigration, urban 'social problems' (such as deprivation, unemployment, crime, drugs and violence), terrorism in France, armed conflict in Morocco, the fear of 'Islamic fundamentalism', the violence which has been experienced in Algeria, cultural incompatibility, and, to combine some of these themes, the danger of North Africa's problems being 'exported' to France as a result of migration.

I conducted a number of interviews shortly after the bombing. In many cases, discussions about the terrorist stereotyping of Islam arose in these interviews. I spoke to Naïm (a social worker in Roubaix) the day after the bomb, and he brought up the subject. He said that, although it was clearly caused by extremists, the average French person would confuse *islamiste* (Islamist) and *musulman* (Muslim)—which would not be

⁵⁶ *Libération*, 5.12.96, p.2.

done with Christian extremists, for example—and express displeasure with ‘the Muslims’ (*‘on en a marre des musulmans’*⁵⁷). Ibrahim argued that the media were largely responsible for the stereotyping of Muslims as terrorists, because they always chose the images which would shock the most. In reality, terrorism was nothing to do with Islam., but he saw the marginalisation of young Muslims in French society as attracting some to more extreme movements (*‘les mouvements durs’*). Ahmed (who was born in Morocco, but had moved to France partly because of an attraction to the greater freedom which he perceived to exist there, and was carrying out doctoral research on the history of Sufi Islam) argued that the stereotype went beyond Islam and was applied to all North Africans:

... il y a un grand problème, un grave problème, comme le cas actuellement du terrorisme. Là, un terroriste qui met une bombe dans les stations du métro, là il y a une très grande partie, peut-être une majorité des Français qui rejette le Maghrébin. C’est pour ça qu’il y a un appel à ne pas faire l’amalgame.... C’est des terroristes et leur but est aveugle, c’est de tuer le maximum, peu importe que ça soit musulman, que ça soit chrétien, juif ou bouddhiste.... Ce sont des gens malades, et il faut arrêter de penser que c’est un problème grave pour le Maghrébin. C’est comme si le Maghrébin est responsable de tout.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ ‘... we’re sick of the Muslims’.

⁵⁸ ‘... there’s a big problem, a serious problem, like the present case of terrorism. Wherever a terrorist puts a bomb in the underground stations, a large proportion of French people, perhaps even a majority, reject the North African. That’s why there’s an appeal not to make the amalgam.... They are terrorists and their goal is blind, it’s to kill as many as possible, not caring whether they are Muslim, or Christian, Jewish or Buddhist.... They are sick people, and people must stop thinking that it’s a serious problem for the North African. It’s as if the North African is responsible for everything.’

4.4. Delinquency

The phrase '*responsable de tout*' could also be applied to the stereotype of Muslims, or 'Arabs' in France, as delinquents. This kind of amalgam has also been identified in relation to Muslims in the United Kingdom. A 1995 article in *The Independent*, written by Andrew Brown and Paul Vallely, discussed this phenomenon critically, and related it to Huntington's clash of civilisations discourse. What is significant is the identification of a perception that delinquency, terrorism, international conflict and Islam are all related. The article read as follows:

Today, the rest of the community regards the emerging social and political force of Islam with an unspecified unease. Riots in Bradford, gang activity in the East End of London, reports of fundamentalist sects at work on university campuses, the prospect of separatist schools, a vendetta murder behind King's Cross station—where police logbooks show that racially motivated incidents happen almost daily—have recently fuelled the potent mixture of apprehension and mistrust that makes up attitudes to Islam. Fundamentalist violence abroad—terrorism in the Middle East, Algeria and the marching Black Muslims of the Nation of Islam in Washington—has only made things worse. As have theories among some intellectuals, such as the American political theorist Samuel Huntington, who predicts ... that the great conflict of the 21st century will be between Islam and the West.

It is a heady mixture of fact, half-truth and myth. It has led some to the fear that Britain's 1.2 million Muslims (no one is sure of the exact figure) may be a

dangerous fifth column in our midst—a Trojan horse in the heart of the nation with a deadly cargo of fundamentalism.⁵⁹

However, I suggest that this article is an exception to the rule, for two reasons. Firstly, it engages in a critique of Islamophobia, which is a marginal rather than mainstream discourse in the United Kingdom media, as has been stated in Chapter 3. Secondly, United Kingdom stereotypes tend to separate 'Muslims' from 'ethnic minorities', associating the former with terrorism, and the latter with delinquency. This contention can be supported by the observation that 'race relations' has a similar place in United Kingdom public discourse to '*intégration*' in French discourse (see Miles 1993: 175-6).

As has been suggested, there is evidence that French media discourses have evolved in a different direction. While it was possible to find an article from 1991 which associated violence in the banlieues with immigration *and* racism, citing different views from the *Front National* and *SOS-Racisme*,⁶⁰ things were much less balanced by 1995. Immigration and '*intégrisme islamique*' were cited as social problems alongside delinquency, drug misuse and unemployment.⁶¹ One article argued for a 'Marshall plan' for the *banlieues* (a term also used by Jacques Chirac): '*... sur l'urgence qu'il y a à régler le problème de l'Islam «car tant qu'on forcera les gens à vivre leur religion dans la clandestinité, on fabriquera des Khaled Kelkal»*'.⁶² Such articles were stating explicitly that Islam was a problem, and the reference to Khaled Kelkal, accused of

⁵⁹ *The Independent*, 5.12.95, pp.1, 2, 5.

⁶⁰ *La Voix du Nord*, 28.5.91.

⁶¹ *La Voix du Nord*, 30.10.95; 3.11.95; 4.11.95. The term '*intégrisme islamique*' is most easily translated 'Islamic fundamentalism', though, strictly speaking, *intégrisme* refers to a nineteenth-century movement among Catholics in Spain, and is no more appropriate than 'fundamentalism', a movement among American Protestants at the beginning of the twentieth century.

⁶² '*... on the urgency of solving the problem of Islam "for when we force people to live their religion in a clandestine way, we create Khaled Kelkals"*' (*La Voix du Nord*, 4.12.95, p.2).

participating in a number of terrorist attacks in the summer of 1995, and shot by police on 29 September of the same year. It was said that he was shot without being allowed to surrender. Paradigm shifts in Orientalist discourse can have powerful and tangible effects, which go beyond discourses and stereotypes.⁶³

Amo Ferhati, the director of *Espace Intégration*, an organisation which works for the 'integration' of 'immigrants' and their descendants in France, argued that Muslims in France were always scapegoats for a range of social problems by the parties of the right and the left: the former directly; the latter indirectly:

... quand tu vas chercher du boulot et tu as un geule d'arabe..., et tu t'appelles Mohammed et que tu es musulman, tu trouves pas de boulot. Donc, dans ma communauté aujourd'hui, le taux de chômage chez les jeunes est de 75 à 85 pour cent..., ce qui est dramatique. Imagine que aujourd'hui en France, la moyenne de chômage, ou en Grande-Bretagne, soit de 30 pour cent seulement, c'est la guerre civile. Nous, on est à 75 pour cent ... de chômage, ce qui sécrète la délinquance, la drogue etc. Le problème de déviance sociale n'est pas un problème de race, c'est un problème social avant tout.... Mitterrand a utilisé des immigrés pour faire monter les fascistes, et pour casser la droite. Mitterrand a fait monter le droit de vote aux immigrés, qu'il n'a jamais donné, mais par contre c'était un leitmotiv pour rassembler la gauche et pour casser la droite. Nous avons donc été des boucs émissaires des partis politiques, même des partis politiques qui disaient nous aimer.⁶⁴

⁶³ Khaled Kelkal was interviewed by a German sociologist, Dietmar Loch, on 3 October 1992. The interview was published in *Le Monde* (7.10.95, pp.10-12), a few days after his death.

⁶⁴ '... when you look for work and you look like an Arab..., and you're called Mohammed and you're Muslim, you don't find work. So today, in my community, youth unemployment is between 75 and 85 per cent..., which is dramatic. Imagine if unemployment in France today, or in Great Britain, was just 30 per cent, there would be a civil war. We are at 75 per cent ... unemployment, which is a cause of delinquency, drugs etc. The problem of social deviance isn't a problem of race, it's first of all a social

Ahmed took up the same theme, citing the regional press in particular. He observed that crimes committed by North Africans are much more likely to be reported in the newspapers than crimes committed by French people, something which he argued could be inferred from the names of people in court reports (examples being Rachid, Karim, Kadir). This was particularly evident when it came to violent crime, but lesser crimes, such as shoplifting, were often dramatised when attributed to a '*maghrébin*'. Examples from reports in *La Voix du Nord* are cited in Table 4.3. These were collected over a period of only one month, and the short time-span adds a definite vividness. Although some of the alleged crimes were certainly serious, others may not have been reported if they were attributed to people with 'French names'. In the more serious cases, the link between delinquency and origin was sometimes made explicitly. The following example is from the case of Smaïl Larabi:

Algérien, cet homme très athlétique, le cheveu ras et le verbe rare, vit en France depuis 1967. Après une scolarité chaotique, il a plongé dans la délinquance.⁶⁵

Looking at this issue, the perception of delinquency, in the context of French political discourses, it is particularly relevant insofar as it has a real impact on French attitudes, government policies, and actual legislation pertaining to nationality and immigration. While doing preliminary fieldwork in Lille in June 1996, I collected some documents concerning the controversies surrounding French nationality and the right of

problem.... Mitterrand used the immigrants to raise support for the fascists, and to smash the right. Mitterrand raised the possibility of immigrants having the right to vote, which he never gave, but, on the contrary, it was a leitmotif for uniting the left and smashing the right. So we've been scapegoats for the political parties, even the political parties who claimed to like us.'

⁶⁵ 'Algerian, this very athletic man, with shaved head and unconventional speech, has lived in France since 1967. After a chaotic time at school, he plunged into delinquency' (*La Voix du Nord*, 6.12.96, p.2).

<u>Name</u>	<u>Conviction (or charge)</u>	<u>Sentence</u>	<u>Date reported</u>
Hachemi M.	Sexual abuse	2 years	20.11.96
Majdid Hadjemar Abdelrazek Frid	Burglary	7 months	20.11.96
Mohamed G.	Fighting	5 months	26.11.96
Kamel O.	Burglary	1 year	26.11.96
Karim Ali Moussa	'Aggression'	16 months	26.11.96
Marhez Djendoubi	Mugging	10 months	26.11.96
Abmed O.	Burglary (related to drugs and homelessness)	8 months	26.11.96
Kamel Hechaichi Mourad Cheriet Faycal Cheriet Mohammed Harrachif Keddour Kazdari	Burglary, violence, forgery (charges)		29.11.96
Saïd Bououden	Rape (charge)		30.11.96 and 3.12.96
Smaïl Larabi	Armed robberies (charge)		30.11.96 and 6.12.96
Norredine Cheikh Amer Quedarbi	Armed robbery (charge)		30.11.96
Malik A.	Throwing stone through window of employment office (charge)	(Remanded in custody)	6.12.96
Aziz E.	Vandalism and violence against police	3 months	10.12.96
Farid D.	Breaking in to a house (for shelter)	8 months detention (not in prison)	10.12.96
Mohammed Langhari	Burglary	2 years	11.12.96
Merghabi Chebira 'others'	Drug smuggling	5 years 3 years 1-2 years	19.12.96
Mustapha Meftah Karim Boumaza Karim Sellam Romuald Podwysocki	'Making a noise' and vandalism	1 year	19.12.96

Table 4.3: Selection of court reports in *La Voix du Nord*

residence in France. These indicated a diversity of representations, but also that events were often dictated by the perception of delinquency, and this affected other people who had migrated to France, whether or not they were 'Arab' or 'Muslim'. In other words, not only was the stereotype applied, but it was sometimes applied *and acted on* indiscriminately. At the time, there was a situation in which seven African men were on hunger strike, having been threatened with the non-renewal of their residence permits, even though they were the fathers of children who were born in France (and who would be entitled to French citizenship). They were granted one year residence permits, leading to the suspension of their hunger strike.⁶⁶ In the media, it was often the individual side which was emphasised—stories were told of certain *sans papiers* who had 'clearly done nothing wrong', such as a schoolgirl in Roubaix⁶⁷—as well as the illogical aspects of the law, represented by the fact that many had been in France legally until a change in the law made their presence illegal. However, there was little direct investigation of the racism of the French state. Nevertheless, demonstrations against this racism were reported, as well as a court case which found that a *sans papier* had been subjected to prejudice,⁶⁸ and there was a demonstration in Lille calling for the granting of ten year residence permits, which was attended by people of European, West African and North African origin, members of anti-racist organisations such as SOS-Racisme and the MRAP (*Mouvement contre le racisme et pour l'amitié entre les peuples*), French anarchists and others.

The *Ministère des Affaires sociales, de la Santé et de la Ville* and the *Ministère de la Justice* published a newspaper in September 1994 entitled *Info Nationalité*, advertising the contention that French nationality was now a personal choice. It read:

⁶⁶ *Libération*, 26.6.96.

⁶⁷ *La Voix du Nord*, 19.11.96, p.2; 20.11.96, pp.3, 6.

⁶⁸ *La Voix du Nord*, 22.11.95, p.5.

Depuis la loi du 22 Juillet 1993, adopter la nationalité française prend un sens nouveau, un sens plus profond. C'est le resultat d'une démarche volontaire et personnelle que l'on appelle aujourd'hui la manifestation de la volonté.⁶⁹

The article, which was somewhat didactic and even propagandist, went on to insist that access to French nationality was not being limited, but that children of 'foreign' parents, born in France, could decide for themselves if they wanted to be French or not. However, the denial of the right of residence in France to parents of French children showed that the law was more xenophobic than was being claimed. Some organisations were critical of the new law, and the way in which it was being used. The argument was that the law was racist, and even the more tolerant parts of the Pasqua laws were being applied in a racist manner.

Again, although the Debré bill, involving stricter immigration control at the French borders and inside France, was criticised, it seemed to be considered obvious that *immigration clandestine* (illegal immigration) and *travail clandestin* (illegal working) were real problems. Even *SOS-Racisme* were beginning to consider immigration quotas.⁷⁰ In addition, it was generally assumed that illegal work was carried out by foreigners, despite a series of articles in *La Voix du Nord* on illegal work by French people; this was referred to as a 'new slavery' (*nouvel esclavage*), implying that the culprits were the employers rather than the employees, but this was never implied in the case of 'foreign' illegal workers.⁷¹

The connection between the extreme-right *Front National* and racism is obvious, especially in the light of assertions by their leader, Jean-Marie Le Pen, about the

⁶⁹ 'Since the law of 22 July 1993, adopting French nationality has taken on a new and deeper meaning. It is the result of a voluntary, personal approach, which today is called the demonstration of will.'

⁷⁰ *Libération*, 21.11.96, p.13.

⁷¹ *La Voix du Nord*, 5.12.96, p.18; 6.12.96, p.18; 7.12.96, p.22

inequality of races (in September 1996, he referred to the *inégalité des races*—when challenged about this on a television programme,⁷² he said that all races were in fact equal, but that some were more equal than others), but to what extent is this seen, in journalistic discourse, to be provoked or caused by immigration and *travail clandestin*? A connection between *Front National* support and unemployment (often attributed to immigration) was cited, as was the success of the *Front National* in ‘areas affected by delinquency’ (*zones touchées par la délinquance*).⁷³

As can be ascertained from the material in this section, the supposition that ‘delinquency’ and other ‘social problems’ are linked to ‘immigration’ is quite common. Although this issue is rarely raised explicitly in debates about integration, it does seem to be present beneath the surface. For example, an article in *Libération* argued that integration at work was contingent on fighting discrimination (24 per cent of ‘foreigners’ were unemployed compared with 11 per cent of French people)—however, there was an emphasis on *legal* immigrants (*étrangers en situation régulière*), which implied that illegal immigration was a part of the problem.⁷⁴ Another article linked ‘first generation’ integration with education and literacy, again making integration the responsibility of the ‘immigrant’ and not of the ‘host society’.⁷⁵ Yet there still seems to be a belief in the idea of *intégration à la française*, as opposed to multiculturalism, which is illustrated by Jean-Luc Allouche’s somewhat tortuous review, written in *Libération*, of Michel Wieviorka’s book, *Une société fragmentée*:

Le «pluralisme culturel» devient la nouvelle instance du «pluralisme démocratique». «La frontière à ne pas franchir est celle qui sépare la

⁷² France 3, 15.9.96.

⁷³ Jean-Marc Dreyfus’s article in *Libération*, 2.12.96, p.5; Vanessa Schneider on 23.11.96, p.14.

⁷⁴ *Libération*, 5.12.96, p.13.

⁷⁵ *La Voix du Nord*, 12.12.96, p.8.

reconnaissance de l'Autre de l'obsession de l'identité.» Admettons.... Les auteurs, même s'ils trahissent çà et là leurs sympathies «multiculturelles», ou s'y résignent, ne sont pas des adeptes échevelés du «politically correct» à l'américaine. Mais l'heure n'est pas, pour eux, à la nostalgie. Mais à l'urgence. La République une et indivisible, tout de même, cela avait de la gueule.⁷⁶

4.5. A new critique of Islamophobia?

It may be that such a tortuous, even pessimistic view, is the appropriate one when it comes to the evolution of media representations of Islam. However, optimism is not impossible. As there was a paradigm shift from exotic to fanatical representations of Islam and of Muslims, so there is the possibility of a new paradigm shift, which takes account of the principles of a critique of Orientalism, asserting the heterogeneity of Islam and of the West, and their mutual compatibility. It is important to bear this in mind. However, pessimism is not impossible either. We may be caught in a vicious circle, as I suggest below. Madeleine Bunting's analysis in *The Guardian* commented on media reports of the Luxor massacre in Egypt, showing that media discourses are also heterogeneous, and sometimes engage in a critique of Islamophobia and Orientalism:

In reporting on the Luxor massacre in Egypt on Monday, the media did not mince their words: the Muslim *fanatics* or *maniacs* behind it were *evil* and

⁷⁶ "“Cultural pluralism” becomes the new face of “democratic pluralism”. “The line which must not be crossed is the one which separates recognition of the Other from an obsession with identity.” Granted.... The authors, even if they betray their “multicultural” sympathies in places, or resign themselves to multiculturalism, are not dishevelled followers of American “political correctness”. But for them, this is not a time for nostalgia. But for urgency. All the same, the one indivisible Republic, that was an elegant idea’ (*Libération*, 19.12.96, p.5).

brutal.... What happened in Luxor has more to do with politics than Islam, but the media coverage ensures that such terrorist attacks affect the lives of Muslims thousands of miles away. British Muslims said yesterday that Luxor would only reinforce the stereotypes and prejudices which to some in Britain link Muslim inextricably with violence and irrationalism.... There is a strong sense of grievance that Muslims are suffering a high degree of economic discrimination which government has not addressed. Bangladeshis and Pakistanis combined have a long-term unemployment rate which is nearly three times that of the next most disadvantaged ethnic minority, Caribbeans.... There are more than 600 mosques in this country, and a growing number are developing as cultural and community centres, with programmes for youth, the elderly and for women.... As one of the prime movers behind the Muslim Council has argued, the most effective way to combat Islamophobia is not to participate in futile debate in a media which is heavily stacked against you, but to build up gradually another positive image of Islam. An image of Islam which emphasises its tradition of justice, of responsibility to the weaker members of the community and of peaceful co-operation which is credible because it is putting such principles into practice.⁷⁷

There is perhaps an irony in this being a media report which criticises media discourse, but that underlines the fact that there is a diversity of media discourses, and that there are struggles to establish and consolidate different discourses. There is a real attempt in this article to critique the analytical errors and dangerous consequences of Islamophobia. The economic difficulties which are faced by Muslims in the United

⁷⁷ *The Guardian*, 20.11.97, p.19.

Kingdom are emphasised in connection with the experience of Islamophobia—indicating a critique of government inaction as well as media discourse—as are attempts of Muslims to ameliorate their own situation, represented by the ‘cultural and community centres’, and the Islamic ‘tradition of justice’ and ‘responsibility to the weaker members of the community’.

This is not the only example of such an approach, indeed, it is not the only one which is cited in this chapter. Such discourse can be found in the medias of the United Kingdom and France, and there is a tradition of academic journalism in France which has shown how damaging Western representations of Islam can be. One example is Olivier Roy’s article in *Le Monde*, in which he argued that the contemporary Algerian conflict has been exacerbated by a Western perception that democracy equals secularism, whereas it is often the Islamic political parties, across the Arab and Muslim world, who are attempting to overthrow highly corrupt and oppressive regimes, which happen to be secularist.⁷⁸

In 1995, some years after the Rushdie affair, an article by Andrew Brown and Paul Vallely in *The Independent* looked back. The superior tone of the earlier article, written at the time of the Rushdie affair, was replaced by an attempt to understand the feelings of Muslims, while still seeking to justify the initial reactions:

The Rushdie affair marked the emergence of an entirely new and assertive group: British-born Muslims. They were aggressively Muslim in ways that shocked secular Britain. But they were also British in ways that shocked their parents, not least in their displays of public aggression. ‘Muslims found the book offensive’, says Dr Pnina Werbner, a social anthropologist who has made

⁷⁸ *Le Monde*, 24.4.97, p.2.

a study of Muslim women, 'but they also found it offensive that no one in the West could understand why they were offended. So they launched major protests—but the state did nothing. It was a moment of truth, and it had two consequences. The Muslims were forced into the realisation that they were British citizens having come to the conclusion that they had to follow British law. They recalled the Islamic ruling—when in a foreign country you follow the law of the land—and that absolved them from dealing with Rushdie. But the affair also confirmed their feeling of alienation in this country: people don't respect them, there is growing Islamophobia, there is racism—all of which is true, but which is a self-fulfilling prophecy.'⁷⁹

Such ambivalence illustrated one important point however, that Islamophobia, like Orientalism, cannot be seen in the context of a subject-object dualism of the West and Islam, in which Islam is a passive victim. Call it a self-fulfilling prophecy, or a vicious circle, or indeed a kind of negative dialectic, there is an unfortunate process by which Western representations of Islam, and Muslim representations of the West *and of themselves*, influence each other in such a way that they become more and more divergent. However, it is not impossible that the emergence of a new critique of Islamophobia is one aspect of a new paradigm shift which breaks out of this pattern, which recognises the compatibility of the West and Islam, and a capacity for mutual enrichment.

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⁷⁹ *The Independent*, 5.12.95, pp.1, 2, 5.

4.6. Comparative discussion and conclusion

There are a large number of comparisons which emerge from this chapter. The first is that material on Islam in France is more easily available, even though this chapter has attempted to find a balance by identifying some themes in media discourse which are more characteristic of the United Kingdom. The difference in availability may indicate that Islam is a more important part of public discourses in France, which would be a significant finding. On the other hand, it may be because I had access to information in France, since I was a foreign researcher and not in a position to influence French public discourses in a way which would affect them. It has certainly been my impression that respondents in France were more open for this reason, even though there was sometimes suspicion. In reality, my position in the United Kingdom is not much more powerful, but the perceptions can be more important than the reality. This can be illustrated with some ethnographic evidence. One person wanted to know if I was a journalist, and he was a social worker, and not a Muslim, though there was a group of Muslims present with whom I was talking (including Naïm, another social worker). When I said that I was not a journalist, and explained what I was doing, he still asked if I was sure that I was not a journalist. One other person refused to do an interview, insisting that I should speak to a 'savant' (somebody with knowledge). I later found that he had been interviewed for Philippe Aziz's book *Le paradoxe de Roubaix*, which portrayed the Muslims in the north of France in a somewhat unfavourable light, and has been strongly criticised by academics and Muslims. On the other hand, it is less likely that such a book would have been written in the United Kingdom, not because the British are more favourably disposed towards Muslims, but because they are happier to ignore Muslims. In a sense, the national stereotypes do explain something here: the stereotype of the French is that

they want Muslims to integrate and appreciate French civilisation (a late twentieth-century version of the *mission civilisatrice*), while the stereotype of the British is that they don't mind what other people do, as long as they don't trespass on anyone else's territory (literally or metaphorically), or interrupt their afternoon tea. This also illustrates the emphasis on *intégration*, or even *assimilation*, in France, compared with multiculturalism in Britain. However, it may be that, in theory, both countries expect Muslims to integrate, but make it impossible in practice.

Similarly, in France, there is more depth to reporting of situations like the Algerian conflict. Again, this may indicate its importance within French public discourses, though it may imply that the French media is still more explanation-oriented. Furthermore, Algeria is much more central to the international context of representations of Islam in France, whereas, in Britain, there is not the same focus on any one country, despite the majority of Muslims in Britain being of Pakistani or Bangladeshi origin. When situations of conflict, apparently involving Islam or Muslims, are reported, there is often a discourse of Islamic extremism in both countries. In France, the most commonly used term is *intégrisme*, compared with 'fundamentalism' in Britain. In both cases, this represents the religious culture of the country in question, and has nothing to do with Islam itself. However, the term *fondamentalisme* is increasingly used in France.

There is an extreme-right demonisation of Muslims in France, which is not prominent in Britain. Neither is there an association of Muslims with delinquency in Britain. However, this does not indicate that France is 'more racist' than Britain (though several respondents, Muslims and 'non-Muslims' in Britain and France, thought this was the case). Rather, racist discourses in Britain focus on a *different* Other, particularly people of African-Caribbean and Asian origin, indicating that popular discourse has not caught up with the shift in academic discourse to a focus on 'Muslims'. In addition,

racism and Islamophobia may be more mainstream political discourses in Britain, for example on the right wing of the Conservative party, which may partially account for the consciousness of Islamophobia in Britain, compared to the '*Islamalgame*' in France.

Finally, there are differences between popular, media, political and academic discourses in both countries, and this sets the media material in a wider context of diversity. When academic discourses focused on national and ethnic identities (such as 'Asian', 'Pakistani' or 'North African'), the media focused on *explanations* of Islam, the lives, practices and constitution of Muslim communities. In academic discourses, this changed as a result of specific 'watersheds', like the Rushdie affair, whereas media discourses have been more event-oriented, and what seems like a paradigm shift can be a temporary fad. In addition, popular discourses seem to be particularly amenable to influence by other discourses, for example media or political discourses, and this has an effect on the construction of Muslim identities, as is argued in the next part of this thesis.

Part II

Muslim identities in the United Kingdom and France

5. Identity

5.1. Introduction

As we saw in section 2.4, Aziz Al-Azmeh asserted that there was a correspondence between the Orientalist imagining of a homogeneous Islam and contemporary Muslim discourses of authenticity and identity. Indeed, he argues that there is 'an objective complicity between exoticism and the rhetoric of identity and authenticity', and a further correspondence with European racism based on an isolationist worldview and mythologisation of history. Thus, there is 'a putative Islamic essence' according to which Muslim identities are 'intrinsically and definitively constituted prior to and beyond acts of constitution and without conditions of constitution, as social essences which, without mediation, become political forces' (Al-Azmeh 1996: 28, 57, 59-60, 63).

According to Al-Azmeh, the concept of identity is a social psychological one whose place in anthropological or sociological thinking is highly contentious:

... the ego is not a subject and can only be analytically defined in relation to its conditions. The same is true of collective identities: not only do they have no exclusive, absolutely and self-reflexive psyches, but such psyches, even if we admit them hypothetically, do not constitute subjects. This is not to exclude altogether, however, forms of behavioural coherence that might episodically display traditionalist regression and similar phenomena, or that might have a

wider anthropological salience. What needs to be emphasised is that this social psychological theme is often assumed to be self-evident, when in fact it requires clarification and proper elaboration (Al-Azmeh 1996: 32).

There is no doubt that identity is a theme which requires careful reflection, and it cannot be assumed to be an ahistorical *a priori* of social scientific research. Further, I agree that an investigation of Muslim identities in the West must take account of the following three things. Firstly, it must take account of the need for a critical evaluation of Orientalist discourse. Secondly, it must maintain an awareness that Muslim identities are constructed, at least in part, through and in response to Orientalist discourse. Thirdly, Muslim identities are not constructed in conformity to an Islamic essence which precedes the existence of the Muslim, a fallacy discredited by Sartre's existence-precedes-essence. However, I do not agree that a critique of Orientalism is feasible if it neglects or disparages Muslim identities. To put this differently, Al-Azmeh neglects three important principles: first, identity does not necessarily imply homogeneity, because identities change over time; second, group identities are progressive as well as regressive, that is, they look to the future as well as the past; third, there are different ideas of what it means to be a Muslim, and they are not all based on the same idea of a homogeneous Islamic essence. Looking at this question sociologically entails defining Islam according to Muslims (existence preceding essence) rather than *vice-versa*, in other words, Islam is what Muslims believe and practice. For the theologian, on the other hand, Muslims would be defined as those people who believe and practice Islam. Generally speaking, the same can be said of the religious believer, which is why Muslims frequently draw a distinction between *Islamic* identity and *Muslim* cultural values or national traditions.

In this chapter, we shall address the above three principles, while attempting to carry out a careful reflection, clarification and elaboration of Muslim identities in the context of a critique of Orientalism. Firstly, we examine the philosophical and psychological context of theories of identity. Secondly, we look at the combination of progress and regress in national identities, arguing that this principle has wider implications, including for Muslim identities, as is implicit in the concept of the *ummah*. Then, thirdly, we look at the theme of changing identities, comparing some contemporary themes with Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialism. Together, this discussion will form a model for the empirical study of Muslim identities, examining them in the context of a critique of Orientalism which emphasises their fluidity (or 'changingness'), their heterogeneity and the different ideas of what it means to be a Muslim.

5.2. Theories of identity

The classic identity statement in philosophy is $a=a$, a is identical to a . Further, a cannot be identical to non- a . For a to be identical to b , b must also be identical to a , and according to Leibniz's law, whatever is true of a must also be true of b and *vice-versa*. In the terms which we have been using in our discussion of Orientalism and Al-Azmeh's critique, if $a=b$, then a and b are homogeneous, and they cannot be heterogeneous. So how can we talk about a personal identity, a changing identity, a group identity or a Muslim identity, and insist that these identities are heterogeneous? To answer this question, we must distinguish numerical identity—with its three properties, outlined above, of reflexivity, symmetry and transitivity—from qualitative identity:

... if a and b are qualitatively identical, then they are exactly alike in their intrinsic qualities and properties and in the relationships thereof—but it does not follow that they are numerically identical. Rather, this relationship between a and b might be expressed by saying that they are tokens of the same type (Baillie 1989: 3).

A personal or group identity is qualitative rather than numerical, though it is unlikely that we could find human beings who are 'exactly alike in their intrinsic qualities and properties and in the relationships thereof'. Due to problems such as this, the philosopher Derek Parfitt (1975, 1976, 1984) concluded that the concept of personal identity was so elusive and unclear as to be meaningless and irrelevant. Further difficulties emerge in the more metaphysical philosophies of identity: if identity connotes what each member of the group has in common, and what distinguishes each member from those who are not part of the group, does the group's identity exist independently of the members of the group, in a Platonic realm of ideas? Is it really possible to define what its members have in common? As a generalisation, social scientific thought has been less metaphysical and more pragmatic, so a more subjective approach to the question of identity has predominated, either explicitly or implicitly. Thus, identity is what I feel myself to have in common with some, and what I feel differentiates me from others. Even more simply, my identity is who I am. But who is the 'I' referred to here? What makes me *me* and not someone else?

This question is still metaphysical, but it does have immediate implications for empirical studies of identity, such as in this thesis. Much of the history of Western philosophy has been a conflict between two different answers to this question, the mind and the body, contemporary theory tending to concentrate on the body. This is arguably

a consequence of an association between modernity and materialism, in which the mind is held not to exist, or to be a physical entity (brain waves), and it may also be connected with a post-Cartesian philosophical reaction against the idea of disembodiment (see Baillie 1989: 49, 88). Thus, argues Henrietta Moore, 'it seems quite evident that the most important characteristic of the person over time, and the one which constitutes its identity, is the fact of physical embodiment', though she maintains that this is a problematic aspect of Western discourse: 'Attributes of personhood, such as the continuity and coherence of the person through time, are socially and culturally established, they are not merely given in the physical fact of embodiment' (Moore 1994: 36). Her own theory is summarised as:

... a notion of the 'lived anatomy' and of bodily praxis as a mode of knowledge that draws on an understanding of experience as a form of embodied intersubjectivity. The very fact of being present as an embodied subject gives a particular character to the ontology of experience which emphasizes the degree to which social interactions are embodied ones taking place in concrete space and time (Moore 1994: 3).

On one level, this seems to be an obvious and pragmatic statement—we cannot experience anything unless we are physically there. Yet it also underlines the importance of the body in the construction and transformation of identity. As we shall see later, Muslim identities are influenced by bodily practices such as *wudu'* and *ghusl* (ablution), wearing the *hijab*, *chador* or other head covering, observing dietary regulations, fasting (during Ramadhan, and *rak'a* or *sajdah* (prostration) during the prayers. Contemporary theories of identity, such as Moore's, must be seen in the context of Michel Foucault's

work. Embodiment was central to his writings on incarceration and sexuality, and his understanding of the subject can be seen as an aspect of identity:

'The precise object constituted by Foucault as his historical field is '... the forms and modalities of the relation to self by which the individual is constituted and recognizes himself as subject....'⁸⁰ It appears from the text that 'self' is a neutral, ahistorical term, almost a synonym for 'individual'. 'Subject' is an active, historical term that refers to a process of interiorization.... Foucault's intention, if I may use that term, apparently is to define the subject experientially and historically.... The subject takes shape through historically experienced discourses-practices (Poster 1986: 212).

This seems to imply that identity involves consciousness (without being fully constituted by consciousness), and that a specific identity cannot exist without the subject being conscious of that identity. This is similar to Sartre's (1943: 20, 29) notion of *conscience (de) soi*, or *conscience (de) conscience*, the argument being that consciousness does not exist without self-consciousness, and self-consciousness does not exist unless one is conscious of that consciousness. One's identity is what one is conscious of, and it may be defined in terms of subjugation to (or acceptance of) power, or of resistance to that same power (understood as power/knowledge).

In fact, Foucault's framework is more pluralistic than this brief summary may suggest. He writes: 'There are two meanings of the word *subject*: subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge' (Foucault 1982: 212); so power/knowledge can be imposed externally or

⁸⁰ Foucault (1984: 12).

internally as bio-power, in both cases establishing the subject and the subject's identity. In addition, Foucault identifies 'three modes of objectification which transform human beings into subjects', that is, ways in which the subject and the subject's identity are constituted:

1. *Scientific classification*:⁸¹ '... the modes of inquiry which try to give themselves the status of sciences; for example, the objectivizing of the speaking subject in *grammaire générale*, philology, and linguistics. Or again, in this first mode, the objectivizing of the productive subject, the subject who labors, in the analysis of wealth and of economics. Or, a third example, the objectivizing of the sheer fact of being alive in natural history or biology'.

2. *Dividing practices*: 'The subject is either divided inside himself or divided from others. This process objectivizes him. Examples are the mad and the sane, the sick and the healthy, the criminals and the "good boys"'.

3. *Subjectification*: '... the way a human being turns him- or herself into a subject. For example, I have chosen the domain of sexuality—how men have learned to recognize themselves as subjects of "sexuality"' (Foucault 1982: 208).

While the use of this model may seem limited to pure theory, it has some epistemological and methodological use, as consciousness, power and the internalisation of power can all be investigated, probably in decreasing order of simplicity. The TST test is a psychological model which allows us to investigate individuals' consciousness of identity. Numerous variations of this test exist (see Turner and Oakes 1989; Yardley

⁸¹ These labels are used by Rabinow (1984).

1987; Younes-Matton 1987; Zavalloni and Louis-Guerin 1979), and more complex self-administered tests, such as the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) are based on similar *epistemological* premises (see Butcher, ed., 1972; Lanyon and Goldstein 1982).⁸² The simplest versions of the TST consist of asking an individual to complete a schedule such as the ones reproduced in Figure 5.1 (overleaf), with no prompting other than what is on the sheet.

Claudine Younes-Matton uses this method to address the identities of Algerian migrants to France who are faced with the question of returning to Algeria, and develops a typology based on their responses: (i) those with a strong *national* (Algerian) identity and a sense of belonging to the *umma*, who want to return to Algeria; (ii) those who have not decided if they want to return, and who have an ambivalent attitude to French and Algerian society; (iii) those who are negative about return, but for whom the *religious* identity is strong; and (iv) those who do not envisage returning to Algeria (Younes-Matton 1987: 403-8). She argues that there is a link between Algerian Muslims' identities and their aspirations, and that this link affects how they live in French society. The main issue facing the 'first generation' has been the wish to return, though they eventually adjust to a '*provisoire durable*':

... afin de résister à la culture qui cherche à l'étouffer et à l'envahir, l'individu en réaction peut renforcer son identité sociale d'origine et au lieu de s'intégrer se renfermer dans son propre monde avec ses propres valeurs, ses propres normes, exagérant même certains aspects culturels ou traditionnels (Younes-Matton 1987: 159).⁸³

⁸² One application of the MMPI which has some relevance to this study is in *The Authoritarian Personality* by Adorno *et al* (1950: 910ff.).

⁸³ '... in order to resist the culture which seeks to suffocate and invade them, the reacting individuals can reinforce their social identity of origin and, instead of integrating, shut themselves off in their own world, with their own values, their own norms, even exaggerating certain cultural or traditional aspects.'

Variation 1: Who are you?

or Variation 2: Tell me about yourself.

- | | |
|---------------|-------------------|
| 1. I am..... | 11. I am not..... |
| 2. I am..... | 12. I am not..... |
| 3. I am..... | 13. I am not..... |
| 4. I am..... | 14. I am not..... |
| 5. I am..... | 15. I am not..... |
| 6. I am..... | 16. I am not..... |
| 7. I am..... | 17. I am not..... |
| 8. I am..... | 18. I am not..... |
| 9. I am..... | 19. I am not..... |
| 10. I am..... | 20. I am not..... |

Figure 5.1: Two variations on the TST (twenty statements test)

This enables the first generation to identify with the group, to have a sense of belonging. In the case of the 'second generation', however, identification with Algeria or Arab-Muslim culture leads to a stronger self-image, a consciousness of individuality and a sense of being different, rather than of belonging, which is not necessarily compensated by an identification with France:

Cette volonté d'affirmation de l'identité nationale et de préservation des liens avec le milieu d'origine permettent aux jeunes immigrés de revaloriser leur image de Soi, à fortiori lorsque les parents souhaitent retourner en Algérie (Younes-Matton 1987: 179).⁸⁴

We can see that the TST model is capable of providing useful data. However, if we are going to look at identity in a sociological manner, we need to move beyond its methodological individualism, and be aware of the extent to which researchers can induce responses and elaborate on the responses given by subjects. Krysia Yardley (1987: 212) points out that the TST lacks 'sophisticated epistemological awareness', and underestimates the extent to which subjects 'actively construct meanings and identities for themselves in relation to the investigatory process'. For example, a Muslim who knew that the researcher was studying Islam would be more likely to put 'Muslim' first than a Muslim who was unaware of the researcher's motivation, and Younes-Matton's respondents may have tried to 'fit in' to her categories. Identities are in a constant process of change, being constituted and reconstituted *vis-à-vis* other individuals, groups, and social processes, including academic research. In addition, we must ask to what extent the group itself has an identity, and what is the relationship between the

⁸⁴ 'That will to affirm their national identity and to preserve their links with the place of origin permits young immigrants [sic] to revalorise their self-image, particularly when their parents wish to return to Algeria.'

group's identity and that of the individual. Is the group identity the sum total of changing individual identities? A sociological instinct is likely to rebel against this proposition, and maintain that we should not study individuals, but interactions between individuals, or even groups themselves. But it is difficult to see how interactions or groups can have identities, if identity implies consciousness. It is more likely that individual identities are caused by the internalisation of social structures and interactions, as Moore and Foucault both suggest. This does make it possible to base our methodology on an individualist epistemology, but, alternatively, to take a more structural and interactionist approach. This would entail a focus on the types of interaction and power structures which exist, their consequences for internalised individual identities, and the process of internalisation itself.

5.3. The nation, the group and the *ummah*

These questions can be partially addressed by Sartre's distinction, made in the *Critique of dialectical reason*, between the series, the fused group, and the statutory group (Sartre 1960, 1976 in translation). These are best explained using Sartre's illustrations. The series was exemplified by the bus queue in the Place Saint-Germain. The individuals were there for the same reason, doing the same thing, but had only a minimal consciousness of being a group, if at all. The individuals did not share the identity of the group, having no consciousness of this identity, but the group itself had some kind of purpose, *raison d'être*, and thus, in a sense, identity. The fused group, exemplified by the revolutionaries of 1789 who stormed the Bastille, identifies a situation (where the individuals are consciously a part of the group, the group itself existing for a consciously defined purpose. The statutory group could take two forms: the surviving

group, that is, a fused group which has lost its *raison d'être* while the individuals have continued to identify themselves consciously with it; and the group which is established or reproduced through a pledge (*serment*) such as the tennis court oath, an act of 'mediated reciprocity' where individuals have a conscious and commonly accepted responsibility to the group, and the other individuals within it.

Before looking at this in a more concrete way, by looking at the concept of identification with the *ummah*, I want to address one of the issues which arose from our consideration of Al-Azmeh, namely, that group identities, including Muslim identities, are progressive as well as regressive, because they look to the future as well as the past. This principle is familiar from Tom Nairn's analysis of nationalism:

The point is that, as the most elementary comparative analysis will show, all nationalism is both healthy and morbid. Both progress and regress are inscribed in its genetic code from the start. This is a structural fact about it. And it is a fact to which there are no exceptions.... Nationalism can in this sense be pictured as like the old Roman god Janus, who stood above gateways with one face looking forward and one backwards. Thus does nationalism stand over the passage to modernity, for human society. As human kind is forced through its strait doorway, it must look desperately back into the past, to gather strength wherever it can be found for the ordeal of 'development' (Nairn 1981: 347-9).

However, this is not unique to nationalism. All group identities have a backward-looking face and a forward-looking face, they look to the past for the strength to face the future. All group identities are healthy and morbid, because they combine inclusion and

exclusion, bringing to individuals a sense of belonging and self-worth, which is offset by a loss of identification with human society as a whole.

My thinking on this subject, briefly summarised to contextualise my discussion of the *ummah*, is as follows. Because national identities in the modern (particularly post-cold-war) world are the strongest and most durable identities to be found, other large-scale group identities are, in a sense, simulations of national identity. From the rise of nationalism until very recently, a national identity implied a clear-cut allegiance to a territory, to the people, authorities and symbols of that territory. Writers such as Gellner (1983) and Hobsbawm (1991) have argued that nationalism is now in decline, and that national identities are growingly anachronistic. However, I would argue, following Nairn (1981) and Minc (1993), that a decline of the nation state does not necessarily imply a decline of nationalism or national identities. A declining political role for the nation state may impel a renewed focus on other foundations of national identity, which may be cultural, ethnic, or indeed religious. The identity of the nation could be understood by asking what are the meanings of those foundations. Similarly, other group identities can be studied by identifying their cultural, ethnic and religious foundations, looking at their relative importance and meanings.

National identities and Muslim identities have a great deal in common. As well as the simulation of national identity which is found in all large-scale group identities, the concept of the *ummah* is very similar to the idea of the nation. Of course, the nation is very difficult to define, but we can say that it exists as 'an imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign' (Anderson 1991: 3, 6), so it is an aspiration rather than a fact. We can also say that the nation is associated with a dialectical process of inclusion and exclusion, by which members of the nation are defined *vis-à-vis* those who are excluded from membership (see Anderson 1991: 7; Nairn

1981: 329-63). Furthermore, according to Benedict Anderson (1991: 12ff.), nations emerged from extant cultural systems, including religious communities, of which the Muslim *ummah* is a clear example. The Qur'an (*Al Baqarah*, 2: 143) presents this concept as follows:

Thus have We made of you
An *Ummah* justly balanced,
That ye might be witnesses
Over the nations,
And the Messenger a witness
Over yourselves.⁸⁵

The word *ummah* can be translated as community, referring to any community or tribe, but it is more commonly understood as a diminutive of *al-ummah al-islamiya* (the community of Muslim believers), or *ummat Allah* (the community of God). We shall return to this shortly. In the Qur'anic verse above, it is notable that the *ummah* is to the nations what the Messenger (*ar-rasul*, i.e. Muhammad) is to the believers—that is, the pre-eminent one of that type. Having said that, the Arabic term translated nations is *an-naas*, more commonly translated mankind, but we would not expect to find a modern concept of the nation in the Qur'an, written in the seventh century. Ron Geaves (1996: 10-27, 41-4) argues that the understanding of the concept of *ummah* has evolved through different periods of Islamic history: the small group of believers in Mecca; the 'ideal society' of Medina; the growing political dimension as Islam spread and the *ummah* was institutionalised in the caliphate of the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties;

⁸⁵ Quotations from the Qur'an are taken from the revised edition of Yusuf Ali's translation, cited in the bibliography as Qur'an (1989).

divisions among Sunni, Shi'a and Kharijites; contacts with the West in the form of Christianity, the crusades, colonialism, and post-war labour migration. So at the end of the twentieth century, the *ummah* can be seen as a non-territorial nation of the world's Muslims, defined either exclusively (as people who follow fully the pillars of Islam and the *sunnah*) or inclusively (as all who were born Muslim). The exclusive definition has something in common with social nationalism, according to which one's national identity is defined in terms of conscious adherence to a nation, its culture, values, and destiny. The inclusive definition has more in common with ethnic nationalism, where national identity is considered to be transmitted through blood ties, causing the nation to be imagined as limited in space, but not in time (cf. Anderson 1991: 5-7; Kellas 1991: 51-2).

In the West, Muslims have often been represented in racialised terms, as has been shown in Chapter 3, and racialisation implies a focus on the body. While Muslims have a variety of national and cultural origins, the body does play a role in everyday constructions of Muslim identity. Examples, cited earlier, include ablution, headcoverings, dietary regulations, fasting during Ramadhan, and prostration. In these cases, what a Muslim does with his or her body is an indicator of a religious identity, sometimes an ethnic or national identity which is articulated in religious terms. As we see later in this thesis, the number of Muslims who fast during Ramadhan is higher than the number who perform *salat*—the group identity is here constructed through what is done with the body.

One could observe that this applies to Muslims everywhere, not just in the West. However, such practices are given added significance in the context of power relations in the West, and these power relations are temporally and spatially specific. Nations and diaspora communities are both defined spatially, the nation being spatially legitimised because its homeland is 'here'. Because of the centrality of the Arabian peninsula to

Islam, and the origins of many Western Muslims in North Africa, Pakistan and elsewhere, Muslims in the West have some characteristics of diaspora, and are defined with reference to 'there', somewhere else. Power, at least legitimated power, belongs to those who are perceived as belonging here.

The West's relationship with Islam adds another dimension to the Foucauldian principle of power/knowledge, in which the *lack* of knowledge is a basis for power. Said (1997b: 163) has already been cited in this thesis as arguing:

... knowledge of Islam and of Islamic peoples has generally proceeded not only from dominance and confrontation but also from cultural antipathy. Today Islam is defined negatively as that with which the West is radically at odds, and this tension establishes a framework radically limiting knowledge of Islam.

Muslims in Western Europe are in a territory which defined Islam as inimical, and consequently have a very particular relationship with power. To escape the epistemological limitations to which Said refers, we can ask how Muslims' relationships with power affect the construction of their identities, taking as an example a situation where issues of power and identity have come together—the Salman Rushdie affair. In one episode of *The Satanic Verses*, Ayesha, a young Muslim holy woman, leads her followers through the sea on a pilgrimage to Mecca, causing most of them to be drowned (Rushdie 1992: 203-40, 471-507).⁸⁶ Some saw this episode as a mockery of religious devotion, particularly the *hajj*, or even of the Prophet's wife Aisha (evoking the

⁸⁶ The story ended with the disappearance of Ayesha and some of her followers, and the survivors claimed to have seen the sea open before them, analogous to 'the gates of Paradise': 'When he found out that he was the only survivor of the Ayesha Haj not to have witnessed the parting of the waves—Sri Srinivas was the one who told him what the others saw, adding mournfully: "It is our shame that we were not thought worthy to accompany. On us, Sethji, the waters closed, they slammed in our faces like the gates of Paradise"—Mirza Saeed broke down and wept for a week and a day, the dry sobs continuing to shake his body long after his tear ducts had run out of salt' (Rushdie 1992: 505).

Sunni-Shi'a split).⁸⁷ For others, it was relatively acceptable due to its dismissal of superstition, or, it has been suggested (based on stereotypes of women's role in Islam), because Ayesha was an uneducated woman (see Akhtar 1989: 28; Hanne 1994: 194, 229, 231).

This episode highlights the diversities within Islam, and the difficulties of a religious group in relating to the ethnic-political power structure. In responding to internal Orientalism, Muslims have a number of choices, which can be classified as assimilation (practising Islam in a private way, reducing their cultural distinctiveness, and demonstrating their 'normality' to the West), withdrawal (accepting their exclusion from Western society, forming a world-rejecting *Gemeinschaft*, and carving out a distinctive identity in the West), and a combined Muslim-Western identity. During the Rushdie affair, according to Akhbar Ahmed (1992: 171): 'Muslim passions were running high and their spokesmen vied with each other in expressing anger.... In this atmosphere, even to hint at a dispassionate analysis of the situation was to risk being labelled disloyal to the cause, a traitor to the community'. Those who had a combined identity were associated with the assimilationists, who in turn were not considered representative of the true Islam. It was the diversities within Islam, and the lack of commonly recognised

⁸⁷ Aisha and Fatima, the Prophet's daughter, are often seen as representatives of the two 'ideals', or stereotypes, of femininity, Aisha representing beauty and sensuality, Fatima representing purity and deference. Fatima, being the wife of Ali, has had a particularly important place among Shi'a Muslims (who regarded Ali as the rightful successor to the Prophet), and some Sunni Muslims have perceived this as an attack on Aisha. In fact, as Denise Spellberg writes: 'The accusation of adultery made against 'A'isha in 5 A.H./A.D. 627, as remembered by Muslims, remained a critical, controversial part of her medieval legacy. The majority of Muslims termed the incident *hadith al-iftk*, "the account of the lie", the tale of the slander and vindication of 'A'isha by a divine revelation recorded in the Qur'an. However, the event also contained the seeds of conceptual conflict regarding issues of honor and shame, belief and unbelief, and truth and falsehood. Each of these three apparently dichotomous pairs would become the object of Shi'i-Sunni polemic. The medieval interpretation of the accusation of adultery became synonymous with definitions of communal honor and identity. Both Sunni and Shi'i Muslims integrated the accusation into the broader framework of their disputes about faith and politics. Sunni Muslim praise of 'A'isha's reputation included a celebration of her divine vindication. Shi'i Muslims did not accept either 'A'isha's vindication or innocence and found in the incident a potent weapon in their polemic against the entire Sunni community.' Furthermore, for the Sunnis, 'A'isha embodied his [Muhammad's] honor and the accusations against her chastity threatened to undermine both the Prophet's male honor and the prestige of his religious mission' (Spellberg 1994: 61-2; cf. Combs-Schilling 1989: 80, 93ff *et passim*).

spokespersons, which made the Rushdie affair so intense. It was not simply a power struggle, but to the extent that it was one, we can see that there is a relationship between group (including *maslak*)⁸⁸ identities within Islam, and power relations. To some extent, Muslims' relationship with the Western power structure was mediated through the 'internal' power structures of the *ummah*.

5.4. Changing identities

Much recent theory in the social sciences, particularly postmodern theory, has focused on the plurality and fluidity of identity, or, rather, *identities* and *identification*. It is no coincidence that contemporary theory focuses both on the body and on the fluidity of identities. These concepts represent, respectively, space and time, and some theorists have integrated the contemporary scientific emphasis on the unity of space/time into their theories (see, for example, Massey 1993). For Keith and Pile (1993a: 1), the relationship between space and time, and the construction of identity, are two central aspects of the debate about modernity and postmodernity (alongside the potential of politics). Muslim identities are frequently influenced by particular places and times, or at least an imagining of them. Centrally, there is the Arabian peninsula in the time of the Prophet and the four 'rightly guided' caliphs (570-661), and even more centrally, the Medinan period (622-630), from which the *Hijra* calendar is dated.

However, the fluidity of space and time makes it difficult to situate the construction of Muslim identities in a specific context, and, by extension, to distinguish the

⁸⁸ The Arabic word *maslak* (plural *masalik*), is an established word translated 'way' (Çatafago 1873, Elias and Elias 1983). It is to be preferred to the term 'sect', which has pejorative connotations, particularly as it translates the Arabic *nihla* and *firqa* (see Chebel 1995: 316, 382). Nielsen (1995b: 133) and Andrews (1993b: 9) have used the word *maslak* to denote a tendency or movement within Islam, which has some centralised organisational structure, but without implying deviancy. Similarly, Philip Lewis defines *masalik* as 'discrete schools of Islamic thought and practice' (Lewis 1993: abstract; cited in Geaves 1996: 6).

specificities of Muslim identities in that context from the generalities of Muslim identities in any context. Muslim identities, as with all identities, are influenced by history, and by the time and place in which they live. This is at the root of the West-Islam dualism which was discussed in Part I of this thesis, and it highlights the effect that space (or place) has on the changing character of identities. In methodological terms, time does not stand still to allow a perfectly synchronic study. The temporal context always changes, and spaces (and places) change as time moves on. We cannot situate the construction of Muslim identities in one time and one place. Rather, we must acknowledge that they have been constructed historically, and that their spatial situation, being variable and fluctuating, can only be studied imperfectly. This also underlines the value of a comparative approach. Granted, comparisons are also imperfect (Øyen 1990: 1-18), but, in the case of this thesis, the French data sheds light on the United Kingdom data and *vice-versa*.

In part, the fluidity of identity is contingent on its plurality—obviously, because it is impossible for someone's identity to change if it is homogeneous. This has an important political implication, as Keith and Pile (1993b: 35) argue:

Where identities are assumed to be fixed and singular, then this provides a firm base on which to mobilise politics; the down side is that this can all too easily exclude potential allies and may be unable to adapt to changing circumstances. On the other hand, where identity is assumed to be multiple, then this facilitates a kind of guerrilla warfare against the powerful, and it authorizes all kinds of alliances and tactics; unfortunately, this may be unable to distinguish between important and irrelevant struggles, and it may create counter-productive alliances between groups who should not be 'bedfellows'.

One can appreciate the attractiveness of fixed, singular identities. We all know where we stand if the only identity which counts is, for example, class identity. However, the changing circumstances of the post-cold-war world highlight Keith and Pile's contention that fixed, singular identities are unable to adapt. The multiple-identity model also gives a more accurate representation of reality. For example, having a Muslim identity does not exclude one from having a working-class identity, a female identity, a given national identity. Indeed, in some cases, a Muslim identity will transform those other identities and give them a different meaning. An example of this is the father-of-family identity, as we see in section 6.5. Keith and Pile identify some problems with multiple identities, but these seem rather spurious. After all, what criteria exist to distinguish important struggles from irrelevant ones, and who decides who is an appropriate 'bedfellow'?

It seems to me that the contemporary emphasis on the plurality and fluidity of identities and identification is also present, perhaps in a clearer and fuller way, in existentialist thought. To summarise Sartre's ideas of freedom and authentic existence very briefly and simply, we cannot be bound by the past to be something in the present or the future. We have the freedom to change or convert, and if we insist that we have no choice but to remain the same, we are in bad faith. However, bad faith is not, as a superficial reading of Sartre might suggest, the cardinal sin of existentialist ethics. We are free, and even have the freedom to choose bad faith, maintaining that our identity is fixed by past events or circumstances. In both cases, the consciousness of the subject becomes identical to her objective reality—if she chooses authentic existence, her identity is radically individualised, and she recognises her freedom to change or maintain her identity. Importantly for our purposes, she may *actually* choose to change her

identity. If, on the other hand, she chooses bad faith, her group identity will be regarded as fixed, and may effectively become fixed as a result. Her role within the group, and the group with which she identifies, would become regarded as imposed by someone or something else.

As we saw in section 2.4, Laroui (1990: 165) argues for a contrast between the *moi présent* and the *moi passé* or *moi futur* to replace the juxtaposition of Self and Other. This is only possible because of existential freedom, the possibility of authentic existence. Otherwise past, present and future would be indistinguishable, because nothing would change. The past cannot be changed, but change takes place in the present, and this can change our understanding of the past. The future cannot be known, but, as with the modern Janus of nationalism, looking to the past can provide the strength to change the present and construct the future. But there are two questions which remain. Firstly, how do identities change? Secondly, what contrasts can be drawn between the *moi présent* and the *moi passé* or *moi futur*? It is my view that these questions can only be answered in specific terms. There is no law-like regularity here, because individual and group identities change in different ways at different times. Each case is a special case, but, in the words of Pierre Bourdieu: 'I believe it is possible to enter into the singularity of an object without renouncing the ambition of drawing out universal propositions' (Bourdieu 1984: xi). Such is the rationale of this thesis.

We must balance Laroui's vision with an awareness that the self-other dichotomy remains a major factor, perhaps the major factor, in the construction of identities, including Muslim identities. However, self and other are not necessarily identified with Muslim and non-Muslim. Self and other are changing categories, and they can even overlap as circumstances change. Foucault's approach is useful here, in that it begins with the other. It is when abnormality is defined that we can begin to identify what is

normal. In this case, the definition of other allows us to define self. In the earlier surahs of the Qur'an, the terms believer (*mu'min*) and unbeliever (*kafir*) are explicitly juxtaposed, as in Surah *Al Kafirun* (109: 1-6):

Say: O ye that reject faith!

I worship not that which ye worship,

Nor will ye worship that which I worship.

And I will not worship that which ye have been wont to worship,

Nor will ye worship that which I worship.

To you be your way, and to me mine.

Here, the believers are those who do not have the characteristics of the unbelievers. In later surahs, this was reversed, and the unbelievers were described as lacking the qualities (and ultimate destiny) of the believers (for example, *Al Tawbah*, 9: 71-80).⁸⁹ Islam began as a critique of the society, and the Muslims were defined as different from that society, but later on, the society was defined as different from the Muslims. As Esack (1997: 138) writes: 'The Qur'an portrays *kufir* [unbelief] as an important factor that both shaped a bloated image of the Self and manifested itself in it and in the accompanying contempt for the weak Other'.⁹⁰ However, this can work both ways. It is not necessarily a question of bloatedness or contempt, merely that the self becomes seen as the norm, and the other as deviant.

However, as has been said, self and other are not always equivalent to Muslim and non-Muslim. The existence and significance of different *masalik*—varieties of Islam—in

⁸⁹ By 'earlier' and 'later' surahs, I mean that Surah 109 is one of the early Meccan surahs, that is, it is said to have been revealed when the Muslims were still a small group, and they had not yet faced serious persecution. Surah 9, on the other hand, is said to have been one of the last revealed, after the battle of Badr—see Yusuf Ali's commentary on pages 413, 435 and 1707.

⁹⁰ For a fuller discussion of this subject, see Esack (1997: 114-45).

Britain have been studied by Francis Robinson (1988), Philip Lewis (1994b) and Ron Geaves (1996), among others. Some are recognised as Muslim, while still being seen as other. Examples of this are the divisions or disputes between Sunni and Shi'a, or Barelwis and Deobandis. In contrast, there are other movements, such as the Ahmadiyya, which see themselves as Muslim, but are defined by others as non-Muslim.⁹¹ We shall look at some of these varieties in Chapter 6, but we can note here that this is a very complex area of analysis. Geaves (1996: 52-79) identifies a long list of binary opposites: first generation migrants v. later British-born generations; women v. patriarchal structures of Asian society; secular education v. religious education; integration v. assimilation; Sufism v. reform Islam; status within migrant community v. class position in British society; regional languages v. English; majority v. minority (racism); *Dar al-Islam* v. *Dar al-Harb*;⁹² ethnicity v. Islam; individual v. community; tradition v. modernity; and fundamentalism v. secularisation.

An additional complexity is added when we consider that identity is not simply something which lies inside the individual, nor is it something which refers solely to the self. We construct identities for other people, and other people construct identities for us. So when we talk of Muslim identities, we are not talking solely about how Muslims see themselves, but also about how others see them. So the Muslim identity, like any identity, is highly complex and sometimes even contradictory. Not only do self-identity and other-identity coexist, they also influence each other. This has a consequence for our methodology—we must look at Western representations of Islam and Muslims in

⁹¹ The Ahmadiyya movement divided into the Lahori branch, and the Qadiani branch. The latter was considered heretical for maintaining that their founder, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, was a prophet. The controversy damaged the Lahori branch as well, which was predominant in London between 1913 and 1935, and was largely responsible for the pioneering Islamic missions in Europe (Nielsen 1995b: 5, 87).

⁹² That is, the House of Islam (where Islam predominates) v. the House of War (where the practice of Islam has been impeded by means of religious persecution). There are debates about whether or not the West can really be considered *Dar al-Harb*—on the one hand, it is certainly not *Dar al-Islam*, but on the other hand, the practice of Islam is not generally forbidden or impeded.

order to study Muslim identities, which is why Part I of this thesis was about Western representations of Islam. Even within the context of a critique of Orientalist discourses, we must accept that Muslim identities are in part constructed according to these discourses.

Western Europe is a socially constructed entity, which has been spatially expressed. The same can be said of Western Europe's historical relationship with Islam. The Ottoman 'Turk' was defined as an outsider, and this was reinforced by his distance. However, the incursions of the Ottoman empire into Austria, and the Moorish civilisation into southern France, threatened the geographical status quo, so the relationship between the West and Islam was defined as Christendom, the church of the martyrs, being threatened by Islam, the religion which was spread by the sword. So Muslims in Western Europe live in a territory which once defined *them* as inimical to its ethos and existence. This attitude had a profound effect on Western European identities, and survives to some extent today (Rattansi 1994: 36; see also Daniel 1993; compare Henry and Fregosi 1990). Jean-François Clément (1990: 90) recounts the legend of a statue in Narbonne, from the time of the Muslim invasion of 719, on which was inscribed:

Fils d'Ismâ'îl, demi-tour! Vous ne pouvez aller plus loin. Je vous en donnerais l'explication si vous me le demandiez, mais si vous ne faites pas demi-tour, vous vous entretuezerez jusqu'à la consommation des siècles.⁹³

Clément concludes:

⁹³ 'Son of Ismael, about turn! You can go no further. I will give you an explanation if you ask, but if you do not do an about turn, you will kill each other until the consummation of the centuries'.

Rétrospectivement, on peut y voir l'idée d'une France non-islamisable, encore faudrait-il pouvoir interroger cette statue pour savoir pourquoi.⁹⁴

5.5. Conclusion

Interviewing statues may be methodologically impractical. In any case, it would tell us little about Muslim identities, which are not cast in stone, but are living, dynamic and in a process of constant change. In this chapter, we have looked at some of the reasons for the complexity of identities—they are heterogeneous, even though the concept seems to imply homogeneity, they are subject to the freedom of human beings to choose authentic existence or bad faith, and therefore they change, though they can be imagined as static and fixed by circumstances, other people, or providence. We have also considered identity as a personal matter, defining who 'I' am, and as a group matter, involving who 'we' are, who 'I' am in that context, the place of the nation, and ways in which our identities are defined by others.

Clearly, identity is an extremely complex phenomenon, or construction, and it would be quite impossible to say all that there is to say about the construction of Muslim identities in the United Kingdom and France. However, we are looking at one particular aspect of this question, situating it in the context of a critique of Orientalism. That is, the perception that Muslim identities are homogeneous, and the effects which this perception has. At the same time, we are insisting that Muslim identities are heterogeneous, and we are making every effort to demonstrate this. Not only are Muslim identities heterogeneous, but so are the ways in which the West perceives Islam, and in which Muslims perceive the West.

⁹⁴ 'Retrospectively, we can see there the idea of a non-Islamisable France, though, to know why, we would need to be able to ask that statue'.

The questions are all intertwined, but, as we look at empirical case studies of Muslim identities in the United Kingdom and France, we can understand the central questions of this thesis in a more concrete way. What perceptions exist of a West-Islam dualism, homogeneity of Islam, and homogeneity of the West? These perceptions can be found in newspaper articles, interviews with Muslim leaders and ordinary Muslims, academic material, and many other places. How are they expressed? Sometimes they are expressed in everyday language, sometimes in a discourse which is aimed at a wider public, sometimes in non-linguistic discourses and symbols. What are their causes and effects? The causes can be found in earlier Orientalist and colonial discourses, the histories of Christianity and Islam, the crusades, and post-war labour migration to Western Europe. They have many effects, which impinge directly on the everyday lives of Muslims and non-Muslims in the United Kingdom and France, on the political situations of these countries, and in the question of who, or what, do people identify themselves with. What dissenting voices exist, how are they expressed, and what are their causes and effects? This is perhaps the most important question, because, if these dissenting voices do not exist, it is difficult to see how the polarisation of Islam and the West will not continue. However, dissenting voices do exist. We looked, in Chapter 2, at the ideas of Esack, Rahman, Arkoun, Laroui and Al-Azmeh. When we ask to what extent respondents have reconciled being Muslim with being Western, French, British, we look for echoes of *their* voices among the everyday actors of Islam in Western Europe.

6. The diversity of Muslim identities

6.1. Introduction

If we are looking for echoes of Esack, Rahman, Arkoun, Laroui and Al-Azmeh, does this mean that we are only interested in the views of Muslims who have effectively been assimilated by the West, who have allowed their religious practice to be diluted by secularisation? If this was the logical consequence of such an assertion, we would have to give up the aim of affirming Muslim identities within the context of a critique of Orientalism, and allow the context to take precedence. However, this is not the aim. We continue to recognise the existence of Muslim identities, with the proviso that there are dissenting voices. A synthesis of these two positions is that Muslim identities are diverse, in spite of Al-Azmeh's problematic which equates identity with sameness, so our immediate task is to describe this diversity and show that it does exist empirically, and can be addressed theoretically.

As a result, the purposes of this chapter can be expressed as follows. The first is to show that there is a relationship between representations of Islam and Muslim identities, in other words, that Islam and Muslim identities are perceived as homogeneous, that they are in fact diverse, and that there is a relationship between these two realities. In making this point, I am addressing the hypotheses of this work, as expressed in section 1.3. Secondly, this chapter completes our analysis of the dialectical basis of Muslim identities, which, like all identities, are constituted by an interaction between identity as it is

constructed by other people (which was analysed in Part I of this thesis), and identity as it is understood and lived by the individual or group in question. To put this differently, there is an attempt in this chapter to address the tension (Al-Azmeh's problematic), which has been discussed in previous chapters, between a valorisation of Muslim identities and an insistence that identity, in this context, does not imply sameness. So, the third purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate, primarily with reference to ethnographic and interview data, the heterogeneity of Muslim identities within and between the United Kingdom and France, and the interaction between representations of Islam and the construction of Muslim identities as responses to these representations.

In this chapter, then, I concentrate on the diversity of Muslim identities. Firstly, I look at the meanings and articulations of Islam, both at the level of mosques and Muslim organisations, and also at the individual level. Then, I identify some sources of Muslim identities, and make some comments about the combination of Muslim identities with other identities. Following from this, I analyse the comparative issues from this data, principally as they are seen by interviewees and respondents in the United Kingdom and France. Finally, I make some comments about Muslim identities, as described in this chapter, as responses to Western representations of Islam and Muslims. In discussing these issues, I draw extensively on interviews with various individuals, mostly carried out in Lille and Glasgow, and on fieldwork notes from the Halaqah circle (an English-speaking Muslim men's study group which meets weekly in Glasgow to read and discuss the Qur'an, Hadith and other topics of interest), the Haqqani Islamic Priori in London (a centre which is owned by Sheikh Nazim's branch of the Naqshbandi Sufi order), and other talks, discussions and observations in settings as varied as a Jesuit spiritual centre, an Arab tea room, and a university lecture hall.

6.2. Meanings and articulations of Islam: mosques and organisations

In asserting the diversity of Islam, it is important to address the issue of sectarian influences, theological and social divisions, and the development of specific *masalik*, 'discrete schools of Islamic thought and practice' (Lewis 1993: 4),⁹⁵ with some kind of central organisation. Identification with the *maslak* is frequently claimed to be less significant than identification with the *ummah*, but it still affects the social circles in which Muslims live, the groups to which they belong, and how they relate to other groups, from different *masalik* to state institutions. It also affects theological emphases which they might make, leading to agreements and disagreements with other Muslims, leading in turn to specific conceptions of Self and Other. So, this section looks at this issue in terms of the kinds of disagreements which exist between mosques in Lille and Glasgow. It begins by identifying some criteria of diversity. Then it examines the impact which the polity and ethos of a mosque or organisation might have on the identities of its individual members, by looking in some depth at the identities of Ismaili Muslims and members of the Naqshbandi order.

Alongside Paris, Marseilles and Lyon, the Muslim community in the Lille conurbation is one of the biggest in France. Due to the insufficient facilities for Muslim worship, and a commitment to anti-racism as part of a pastoral responsibility for migrants, the Catholic bishop of Lille, Monsignor Adrien Gand, put a chapel, free of charge, at the disposition of the Muslim community in 1972. Due to a number of problems, including the Church's tendency to confuse the Muslim community with the Algerian authorities, the *Mosquée de Lille* was not opened until 1980 (see Kepel 1991: 118ff, 295ff). Another mosque was built from 1985 in the Lille Sud district (the last

⁹⁵ Cited in Geaves (1996: 6). Compare Nielsen (1995b: 133).

phase being finished in early 1997). These are the two biggest mosques in Lille itself. There are smaller mosques in Lille and surrounding towns, particularly Roubaix. One in Roubaix which has acquired a reputation for preaching an *Islam de rupture* is the *Mosquée Ad-Dawa* on *rue Archimède* (see Aziz 1996: 153-4).

Most of the Muslims in the Lille area who I was able to meet were attached to the Lille Sud mosque. It was more difficult to meet Muslims from the other mosques, including the *Mosquée de Lille*. Jacques, a Catholic priest who has had a long involvement with the Muslim community in the Lille area, and has been a leading participant in inter-religious dialogue, told me that this was due to different ideas concerning the integration of Muslims in French society. Both mosques consider integration to be worthwhile, but the leaders of the Lille Sud mosque consider that it has not yet been achieved, so it necessitates an openness to interested 'non-Muslims': politicians, journalists, researchers, members of other religions. My interviews with leaders and attenders of the Lille Sud mosque tended to confirm this. For the *Mosquée de Lille*, however, integration has effectively been achieved, so their priority is to practice their religion in as private and low-key a manner as possible.

The integration of 'immigrants' into 'French society' is an important and controversial subject in French political discourses, and the acceptance, at least in principle, of *laïcité* is often considered a measure of Muslims' integration. These mosques have a generally positive attitude to *laïcité* and integration. In this context, I am referring to *religious* integration, that is, a view that Muslim and French values are not incompatible, and a willingness to adapt Islamic practices to 'fit in' with 'French ways of life'. I am certainly not accepting the integration problematic, as I make clear at other points in this thesis, nor am I seeking to make a positive value judgement about religious integration. Nevertheless, other people do, and some of them are important

leaders of the Muslim communities in France, so I use the notion of integration analytically from the point of view of actors who use the term in their everyday analyses, but not as an objective measurement. Amar Lasfar, the rector of the Lille Sud mosque, said in an interview which I conducted:

On a toujours dit que la laïcité est une chance pour la religion musulmane ici en France. Dieu merci que l'État est laïc. Sinon, je pense pas qu'on va pratiquer la religion musulmane en France. C'est la laïcité qui nous offre l'existence. Le cadre laïc, c'est pas uniquement on l'accepte, nous, on le défend. Nous, les musulmans, nous défendons la laïcité, nous défendons le cadre laïc. Ce qui nous chagrine, c'est l'interprétation de ce mot laïcité.... Moi, je peux vous dire que il y a deux ans, juste avec le déclenchement de l'affaire du voile ici en France, on a découvert qu'il n'y a pas un seul sens à la laïcité. Donc, chaque groupe, ou voire chaque citoyen, a son interprétation de la laïcité.⁹⁶

The *Mosquée Ad-Dawa* in Roubaix has a reputation for being 'fundamentalist' (*intégriste*), but we need to be aware that, besides the problems with applying terms like fundamentalism and *intégrisme* to Islam, this is only a reputation (though reputations do have a complex sociological significance). Amar Lasfar has argued that it is due to two factors: all Muslims, particularly Algerian Muslims (who comprise most of that mosque's constituency), are suspected of *intégrisme*; and the *Mosquée Ad-Dawa* does not

⁹⁶ 'We have always said that *laïcité* is fortunate for the Muslim religion here in France. Thank God that the State is *laïc*. If not, I don't think we would practice the Muslim religion in France. *Laïcité* offers us existence. The framework of *laïcité*, we don't just accept it, we defend it. We, Muslims, defend *laïcité*, we defend the framework of *laïcité*. What grieves us is the interpretation of the word *laïcité*.... I can tell you that two years ago, with the triggering of the headscarf affair here in France, we discovered that there isn't just one meaning of *laïcité*. So each group, or even each citizen, has its own interpretation of *laïcité*.'

subscribe to the principles of an *Islam de France*.⁹⁷ These principles, to which Lasfar himself has publicly subscribed, are based on the idea that Islam is flexible, and can be adapted to the surrounding culture. Where a mosque, or a group of Muslims, does not follow this idea, what is practised is a traditional articulation of Islam, which is often labelled fundamentalist or *intégriste*.⁹⁸

There are also a number of smaller mosques in the Lille area, which are sometimes difficult to find. Often, someone's front room, or some other building, is used as a mosque. French Muslims often refer to these as *salles de prière*, rather than *mosquées*, following the Maghrebian Arabic distinction between *masjid*, used for any mosque, and *jami*, reserved for mosques in which the Friday *khutba* (sermon) is preached (see Lamchichi 1989: 319). These mosques tend to be frequented by the first generation of Muslims in France, and their attitude to the religious integration of Islam in French society seems to be relatively detached.⁹⁹ That is not to say that those Muslims are apathetic about integration. On the contrary, they have had to work particularly hard to integrate into French society. On the other hand, religious integration is not one of their priorities, they do not subscribe to an *Islam de France*, and could be labelled traditionalist. Yet they are never labelled *intégriste*, like the *Mosquée Ad-Dawa*.

Following on from this, it is possible to construct a typology of the various mosques in the Lille area according to their outlook on integration. There are those who are generally positive about religious integration, and maintain that it is a *fait accompli* (like the *Mosquée de Lille*), those who are positive but consider it an (as yet) unreachable goal

⁹⁷ Cited in Aziz (1996: 154).

⁹⁸ There was a situation in 1994, which I discuss in section 4.3, where a woman died as a result of drinking several litres of salty water, allegedly part of a traditional Muslim remedy against epilepsy. The treatment was prescribed by the Imam of the *Mosquée Ad-Dawa*, and the story was taken up by the press, who deduced that this mosque was *intégriste*. It seems to be from this event that the mosque got its reputation for *intégrisme*, though the confusion with traditionalism is obvious (see Aziz 1996: 19ff.).

⁹⁹ I am aware that expressions like 'first generation' are problematic, but I use it here (and elsewhere in this chapter) to denote those Muslims who migrated from North Africa to France as part of the large-scale labour migrations of the 1950s and 1960s.

(Lille Sud mosque), those who are generally negative about religious integration, and see it as happening (*Mosquée Ad-Dawa*), and those who are negative or detached, and for whom religious integration is not a question which arises (the smaller 'first-generation' mosques). As I argue in Chapter 9, those Muslims who are involved in inter-religious dialogue tend to belong to the first two groups. They are not the only ones who are affected by *laïcité*, but the third and fourth groups are unlikely to participate in dialogue. The third group has a very different way of dealing with *laïcité*, and is more concerned with distinguishing Muslim from non-Muslim than Christian from *laïc*. Concomitantly, the fourth group is becoming less significant in terms of the statistical composition of the Muslim community in France, and in terms of its influence.

An analogous typology would probably *not* be appropriate to an analysis of Islam in the United Kingdom. According to Michael—a Catholic priest in Glasgow who has a long involvement in trilateral dialogue between Christians, Muslims and Jews—it is more common for mosques in the United Kingdom to be divided according to language, though it should be emphasised that this is connected with countries of origin, national identities and political divisions, which often influence French Muslims' attitudes towards religious integration. He specifically cited the mosques in Pollokshields, in Glasgow, of which he has some knowledge. Linguistic divisions are often tied up with arguments about who will be the Imam in a specific mosque (for example, whether it should be an Urdu or Punjabi speaker), or spokesperson for the wider Muslim community in the absence of full-time clergy.¹⁰⁰ He said that European converts to Islam often think that they are the ones who 'have been here all the time', who know the surrounding society,

¹⁰⁰ In theory, Sunni Islam has no clergy. On the other hand, there are problems with the assertion that there are no clergy or anticlerical movements in Islam: there are clerics in Shi'a Islam (see, for example, Roy 1994: 28-30); anti-mullah jokes are common in some Muslim countries (for example Afghanistan—Tirard-Collet 1997), connoting a kind of anticlericalism; there is a 'latent anticlericalism' directed against the mullahs by some Islamists (Roy 1994: 58); and 'the attempts in most countries to establish some form of common Muslim front or umbrella organization is evidence of an adaptation of structures in a pseudo-ecclesiastical direction' (Nielsen 1995a: 108).

and who can communicate best with that society, while Asian Muslims often think that they understand Islam more deeply, they have been taught it from childhood, so they know 'how it's done', or what the customary practices are. However, I have come across Asian and other 'born' Muslims who have cited 'the converts' as the ones who often have the best understanding of Islam. There is some truth in this, as there are variations in 'customary' Muslim practices. For example, many British Muslims of Pakistani origin practice as they were taught by their parents, relatives, or other people with an important role in the secondary religious socialisation of children, but some of these practices may be more reflective of Hindu influence (positive or negative) than the prescriptions of the Qur'an and Sunnah. In reality, there are two sides of the coin here. As Michael pointed out, there is a 'show-of-unity ethic', according to which Muslims will attempt to hide their divisions from 'non-Muslims', but this does sometimes involve a real attempt to develop unity and to appreciate other forms of practice and ways of thinking within the Muslim *ummah*, sometimes even to learn from them.

This 'show-of-unity' ethic was sometimes in evidence, though only up to a point. Mustapha, for example, was insistent that there is only one Islam, that Shi'a and Sunni are all the same. At the same time, he was critical of groups which (as he perceived them) seemed to worship Ali, and of certain Sufis who have said things like 'I am God'. Al-Ghazali, the famous medieval 'harmoniser' of Sufism and 'orthodox' Islam, was acceptable to him, because he came back to a much 'purer' Qur'anic Islam after his time as a Sufi, and it was then that he wrote his important works. So he showed what was good about Sufism, while also highlighting its dangers. Early on in my research (late 1995), I asked Akbar, an Imam in Glasgow who came from Egypt, about the different mosques. I remarked that I was a bit confused by all the different names, like Barelwi and Deobandi. He also said that there is not such a big difference—any Muslim can, in

theory, pray in any mosque, though some (the Shi'as in particular) effectively reserve their mosques for the members of their own 'sects' (this was the word he used).

On the same theme, I once visited the Glasgow Central Mosque for *ifthar* (breaking the fast at sunset during the month of Ramadhan), and Ali (a university lecturer from Egypt, who is a leading figure within Glasgow's Muslim community) was giving a talk about *Eid*. He said a few things about worship, and emphasised that it is important to worship Allah as He would like, not as we would like. Afterwards, somebody asked a question about the possibility of having one *Eid*, because the Imams had been unable to agree on the dates for Ramadhan that year. Ali agreed that it would be good if their leaders could agree on a common day for *Eid*, enabling Muslims to be one *ummah*. This was a genuine unity ethic, in my judgement, not a *show-of-unity* ethic. However, there is a diversity ethic as well. After Ali's talk, Mustapha pointed out to me that there is no central authority in Islam to decide things such as the date of *Eid*, or questions of doctrine, and he saw this as a blessing rather than a curse, even though it does cause certain problems.

Although there are different *masalik* in all countries with a significant Muslim population, I found that this had a particularly *tangible* (but not necessarily greater) effect on Muslim identities in the United Kingdom (though not in Glasgow, which is why I went further afield). Naima gave me some information about the Ismaili community in the UK and Scotland. The present community has been in the United Kingdom for about 25 years, coming mostly from the Indian sub-continent and East Africa, due to the expulsion of Asians from Uganda in 1972 and Tanzania in 1970. Some have come from Iran and other parts of the Middle East where they have faced similar difficulties and persecution. There were some Ismailis in London before this period, but not very many, and they are still mostly based in London. Now, there are about 10,000 Ismailis in the

United Kingdom, of whom 8,000 are in London, 500-1,000 in Birmingham, a similar number in Leicester, and some in Liverpool and Manchester. In the 1970s, there were about 200 in Scotland, though this number has now declined to about 100. Though most of them live in Glasgow and Edinburgh, the rest are quite spread out, with a few living in Dundee, Aberdeen and the Borders.

The Ismailis do put an emphasis on the relationship with their Imam, which Naima referred to as a covenant, and this can be compared to the relationship some Sufi *tariqas* have to their *pir*. Similarly to the Sufis, the Ismailis emphasise the esoteric aspect of the Qur'an, believing that the Imam's role is to interpret the Qur'an for the present age. Nevertheless, there is an emphasis on personal search and the use of one's God-given intellect. The previous Imam placed a great deal of emphasis on education, particularly of women. For example, if a couple have a son and a daughter, but can only afford to educate one of them, they should educate the daughter, since she will educate her children and her education will be of benefit to the community, whereas a man's education is more likely to be of benefit to himself only. Thus, the Ismaili communities tend to be very highly educated, on average slightly more than the societies in which they live. In terms of dress and social codes, they have a policy of consciously blending in, so that Ismailis in the West (she referred to 'we in the West') will dress in Western clothing. There is also an emphasis on economic empowerment, again particularly for women, and there are various support systems to enable this to operate, along with social, cultural and religious support systems. People who are given a leadership role exercise it for a specified period of time, usually three years. Economic empowerment, however, is combined with an emphasis on service and philanthropy.

I asked Naima a twin question, firstly about identity, and whether or not Ismailis really had a Muslim identity which would be seen as something in common with a Sunni

Muslim, and, secondly, how the stereotypes of Muslims which exist in the West affect the Ismaili community specifically. Naima was emphatic that Ismailis see themselves as Muslim first, as Ismaili Muslims. In saying this, she was taking a diametrically opposed view from the one expressed by Tissa Fernando (1979: 361), that: 'The Ismailis are a Muslim sect, but they identify themselves as Ismailis rather than Muslims'. According to Naima, they recognise that their interpretation of Islam is different, but will insist on its validity, that they are in mainstream Islam and not 'a sect of a sect' as they are often understood to be. Some Ismailis, for example, when they talk about the history of the split between the Ismailis and other Shi'a, will insist that it was the others who broke away, not the Ismailis themselves. The Imam has often addressed this issue in his speeches, pointing out that the perceived division between Shi'a and Sunni is simplistic, comparing this with a Catholic/Protestant division in which all Catholics are perceived as terrorists because of the IRA.

We talked about the relationships which Ismailis have with the *Ahl al-Kitab*, and participation in inter-religious dialogue. Dialogue does take place, though not often the formal 'sitting round a table'. There is an emphasis on the theological similarities between Ismailis and other Muslims, and other religious groups, and also the similar attitudes to ethics and humanitarianism, which makes for a kind of practical dialogue. Naima talked about the religious experiences of some of her clients (she works in a counselling centre for 'black' and 'ethnic minority' women in Edinburgh). Often, there is a problem with the 'freezing' of religion and culture among Muslims and ethnic minority cultures in the United Kingdom. When they come here, they ensure that things remain the same, but when they visit their country of origin they find that things have moved on. So, while there is no separation between the religious and social sphere for Ismailis and

other Muslims, the question arises of what is the religion within the context of the rest of (social) life.

The issue of identity was less explicitly addressed by members of the Naqshbandi Sufi order in London, but there were numerous tangible and significant indicators of a distinctive identity within Islam and United Kingdom society. I visited the Haqqani Islamic Priori, a centre of their order in North London, in September 1997. There was a school (*madrassah*) alongside, which had been converted from a church building, though I was told it was about to close. Apparently, the centre came into being when someone offered a large sum of money to Sheikh Nazim, who is the head of their branch of the Naqshbandi order. He refused, but told the donor to buy a house which could be used by 'the British people'.

Hussein, a convert from a Greek Orthodox background, who, like most of the men there, wore a turban, told me that I could meet 'a Sufi master' (it was afterwards that I found out who Sheikh Nazim was), though he was anxious that my reasons for meeting him should be related to a spiritual search, rather than academic curiosity. He referred to the 73 sects of Islam,¹⁰¹ and said that the Naqshbandi order represented the true sect, because of their allegiance to the Sheikh, who is a successor to the Prophet. His picture of the order was very strongly couched in terms of the Sheikh, but he was quite bemused by me asking what they *did*, and what was special about them. He told me that Islam is Islam, that fundamentalists are not Muslims, people don't believe in Islam or come to Islam. Rather, they come to God.

Hussein then took me to meet Sheikh Nazim, and said I should ask for his blessing. He asked if I had ever met a saint before—when I said no, he said I should get ready for it. He spoke about the Sheikh in quite glowing terms – not only was he 'not like any of

¹⁰¹ There is a Hadith in which Muhammad said that his followers would be divided into 73 sects, of which only one would be saved.

us', but he was a very humble man.... I was warmly welcomed by the group of about fifty men and women, many of whom were wearing turbans and using rosary beads,¹⁰² and I was introduced to the Sheikh. When he found out that my studies related to Islam, he asked: 'What is Islam?' I replied: 'You know better than I.' He answered me with a kind of Socratic dialogue. He asked about my own religious affiliation, then pointed to a number of others, referring to each one by name, and telling me about their nationalities and backgrounds. In each case he said that this person was Christian, now Muslim. When he got to the end, he said that Muslims and Christians were all the same. The Socratic dialogue ended (much to the group's amusement) with me saying: 'So I am Muslim?'; and he said: 'Very good.'

He spoke about a number of issues, including the importance of being prepared for death, and a number of the world's problems which, for him, were a result of people not knowing the difference between *haram* and *halal*. People would say '*al haq*' while he was making his pronouncements, and he would start praying from time to time, calling something (often the *shahada*) which everyone would repeat. People seemed to hold on to every word he said, someone was doing a video recording and others were putting Dictaphones in front of him. Someone asked if he would rejoin them for the '*asr* prayer, and he wasn't sure—he needed to sleep, and his deputy could preside since he was 'a full Sheikh'. Everyone laughed. Otherwise, he would pray '*asr* with them. People kissed his hand as he left, someone else touched the material which hung from his turban.

Afterwards, I spoke to some others. A few people told me how lucky I was—one said you don't come to the Sheikh, but you get brought—another said that the Sheikh had just been saying that someone with a little bit of good in his heart will be brought to

¹⁰² The Sufi Muslim rosary (*tasbeih*) has 99 beads (sometimes 33, to be repeated three times), which have a number of meanings and representations, such as the 99 names of God, or the 99 stages towards unification with God (see, for example, Chebel 1995: 89, 412-3; Schimmel 1975: 169-70, 177).

meet the friends of God¹⁰³ (as if I was the fulfilment of this prophecy)—another asked if the Sheikh had given me a new name. As I was leaving, I spoke to Omar, and we talked about the turban (he said it acted as a reminder to him, helping him to concentrate on prayer), his thoughts about the *hajj* (he hasn't been yet, and can't really afford to, but the intention is more important, and there are other acts of worship which can be done *en lieu*), his wife and child (they met in Eastbourne, and he took her to the centre, where they were told that if they were going to sleep together they should get married—the ceremony was extremely simple), a Quaker retreat he had done, and other things. He also asked about Scottish devolution and other things. He said he often goes to pray in churches, becoming a Muslim for him was not a conversion away, but another step. His father, Abdulmalik, seemed to be a leading member of the priory as well. He talked to me about the *shahada*, saying it was making a step *into* Islam (not *within*). As an illustration of the esoteric qualities of this group (or perhaps their sense of humour), he told me that he had a potion to cure baldness.

In Lille, I spoke to Ibrahim, who was also a member of the Naqshbandi order. I met him first in December 1996, before I had visited the Naqshbandi centre in London. Ibrahim said that his parents were not particularly practising Muslims, but that at the age of 18 he wanted to practice and to know (*connaître*) his religion better. So he started learning Arabic, then the Qur'an, then he travelled in some Muslim countries, particularly Morocco and Syria, where he learned from a number of Imams, some quite well known, and joined the Naqshbandi order in order to 'deepen' (*approfondir*). Now he teaches Islam in the *Mosquée Abu Bakr* in place Faidherbe in Roubaix. About this 'deepening', he said:

¹⁰³ Sufis often refer to themselves as the friends of God.

... à partir du moment où on veut approfondir sa foi, on se rend compte qu'il faut une certaine discipline spirituelle. C'est un travail spirituel aussi, et cette discipline spirituelle, cette éducation spirituelle, on peut pas l'apprendre n'importe comment, dans un livre ou dans les cassettes. C'est pas le livre ou la cassette qui peut nous éduquer. C'est l'enseignement d'une personne qui est vivante en face de nous, qui donne des conseils, et qui voit aussi ce qui est bon.... Il donne un conseil plus personnalisé, alors qu'un livre donne un conseil plus général. Donc j'ai senti un besoin d'avoir cette éducation spirituelle, et donc ça m'a poussé à chercher une affiliation dans une confrérie soufie.¹⁰⁴

Significantly, Edgar (a Catholic priest in Lille who was heavily involved in Muslim-Christian dialogue) told me that Ibrahim had been at a Muslim-Christian meeting, and said that, for Muslims, the Qur'an is the Word of God written, while Jesus Christ is the Word of God made flesh, a comment which is something of a cliché, but in this context I would say that it indicated some depth of thought. We shall consider the significance of such an insight in Chapter 9. Having visited the Naqshbandi centre in London, however, I was struck by the contrast between Ibrahim's independence and depth of thought on the one hand, and the importance, sainthood, and (I thought) near infallibility which were attached to Sheikh Nazim on the other. I met Ibrahim for a second time in October 1997, and asked him about this. He explained that the Naqshbandi order had two branches, one of which was led by Sheikh Nazim, who lived in Northern Cyprus, and the other one of which was led by his Sheikh in Damascus. Sheikh Nazim's branch had more

¹⁰⁴ '... from the moment when one wishes to deepen one's faith, one realises the need for a definite spiritual discipline. It is also spiritual work, and this spiritual discipline, this spiritual education, cannot be learned any old way, from a book or cassettes. A book or cassette cannot educate us, but the teaching of a living person in front of us, who gives advice, and who also sees what is good.... He gives more personal advice, while a book gives more general advice. So I felt a need to have this spiritual education, and so that pushed me to search for membership of a Sufi brotherhood.'

Western converts who were completely new to Islam, so it was necessary to explain Islam in a simpler, more formulaic way. As a result, the Sheikh became a more central figure (a bit too central, he seemed to imply), though he insisted that the two Sheikhs were on very good terms, and met each other frequently.

6.3. Meanings and articulations of Islam: individuals

We see from this that particular *masalik*, like the Ismailis or the Naqshbandi order, have their own specific understandings of Islam, and that the *maslak* provides a sense of belonging, a group ethos, and an influence on the identities of its members. Aside from membership of different *masalik*, individuals expressed a diversity of meanings attached to Islam, or what it meant to be Muslim, and that is the subject of this section. For some, the formulaic, or, to use a less pejorative term, propositional understanding was predominant, while for others, the answer was more related to an internal, personal, subjective, experiential, existential reality. Of course, the two understandings are not mutually exclusive—many Muslims would insist that certain beliefs and practices are *sine qua non* of Islam, and that they must be internalised and ‘real’, to ‘cultivate an intense relationship with Allah’, as Fouad (who was generally oriented to what seemed like an Islamist understanding of Islam) put it. However, these two understandings do constitute different emphases, so I shall examine them in turn.

Within the first category, propositional emphases, it is possible to discern two sub-categories: an emphasis on practices; and an emphasis on beliefs. While some expressed the essential practices of Islam in terms of a ‘boy scout ethic’ of being kind and helpful to people, more referred to *ibadat* (worship, obedience, often seen in terms of the pillars of Islam) or *dawa* (propagation of, or invitation to, Islam). For Abdallah, a law student and

president of the Tourcoing branch of *Jeunes Musulmans de France* (JMF), Islam was a message to transmit, which was a responsibility of all Muslims, though conversion was the work of God:

J'ai des copains qui sont non-musulmans, je leur explique l'Islam de temps en temps, on parle de la religion, je leur explique qu'est-ce que c'est l'Islam, sans pour autant leur imposer. Bien sûr, c'est naturel, et même c'est un devoir pour nous, puisqu'on considère qu'on est tous des mini-prophètes, au sens où, comme le Prophète, on veut transmettre la religion, on doit expliquer aux gens, informer les gens que ça existe. Il est à eux de prendre leur responsabilité.¹⁰⁵

There were various attitudes towards the idea of *dawa*, from this one to the very negative (expressed by Amro Ferhati). Hassan, who was vice-president of the *Ligue Islamique du Nord*, occupied a middle ground. For him, *dawa* could take place within a context of inter-religious dialogue, because it started from the Qur'anic principle of 'no compulsion in religion' (*Al Baqarah*, 2: 256), and could only follow an initial opening of confidence and mutual understanding. To perform *dawa* was understood as taking the initiative to develop this mutual understanding.

When we consider Islam *qua* practices, we must also consider degrees of practice. Amar Lasfar argued that one could not make a distinction between practising and non-practising Muslims, but this distinction was made by a number of interviewees who perceived themselves as practising, and who perceived themselves as non-practising. When I asked Abdallah if he thought the whole Muslim community shared the same ideas

¹⁰⁵ 'I have friends who are non-Muslims, I sometimes explain Islam to them, we speak about religion, I explain to them what Islam is, without ever imposing it on them. Of course it's natural, and it's even a duty for us, since we consider that we are all mini-prophets, in the sense that, like the Prophet, we want to transmit the religion, we must explain it to people, tell people that it exists. It's for them to take their own responsibility.'

which were important to him, he replied that not all shared the same ideas, only about 15 per cent were fully practising (indicating that he saw his own ideas as synonymous with a fully practising Islam). When I asked him to elaborate on what he meant by practising, he said those who practised the fast of Ramadhan *and* the five daily prayers, while the fast alone was performed by perhaps as many as 60 per cent of Muslims in France. However, he saw this as a cultural phenomenon rather than a religious one: in North Africa, for example, the fast is a tradition and is performed by everyone, even some who do not see themselves as Muslim. Other estimates would indicate that 15 per cent is a lower estimate (20 per cent being the upper estimate), and 60 per cent is an upper estimate (the lower estimate being about 40 per cent).

The distinction between 'Muslim cultures' and Islam *per se* was emphasised by Saïd, who came to France from Algeria in 1993. He said that in Algeria Islam is mixed with many traditions, surrounding, for example, the role of women, which were nothing to do with Islam. In France, however, these traditions were not so present, and the generation of Muslims who had been born in France were more independent from those traditions than their parents. Jean also insisted on making a distinction between those who had been born in France and those who had moved to France from North Africa, asserting that, within the latter group, there were many who were *musulmans de tradition*, in other words, those whose practice was motivated by tradition rather than theological or inner conviction.

For Abdallah, part of the ethos of relating to others was the principle of openness (*ouverture*). He cited a Hadith to show that Muslims had to be open to wisdom no matter where it came from, from a Muslim or a non-Muslim, from one kind of experience or another. Nevertheless, in his discourse, and that of others, there was an implicit truth claim for the *beliefs* of Islam. One evening at the Halaqah circle, Malik gave me a book

entitled *The Choice*, by Ahmed Deedat (1993), which was about Christianity and Islam, using some of the prophecies in the Old Testament to prove that Muhammad was the one who was to come, the greatest of the Prophets, even the Paraclete.¹⁰⁶ Malik said that it was very good, though Ali said that it was quite a combative book. Although its demolition of Christianity is based on very tenuous interpretations of the biblical texts and of Christian beliefs (I examine aspects of such a combative approach to Muslim-Christian relations in Chapter 9), it provides some insights into the conviction of many Muslims that Islam is *the* truth, and that this claim is backed up by pre-Qur'anic evidence from God's other books, as well as from history and nature. Fatima, who regarded herself as 'non-practising', argued that the Qur'an contained teachings about astronomy and meteorology which were not known at the time, and that this was evidence of its divine origin. Ali was particularly enthusiastic about the Qur'anic references to 'pairs' (e.g. 'fruit of every kind He made in pairs', and 'Glory to Allah, Who created in pairs all things that the earth produces'),¹⁰⁷ arguing that the 'gendered' nature of plants and atoms would not have been known at the time, and that this was therefore a part of 'the miracle of the Qur'an'.

While the propositional understanding of the nature of Islam was expressed partly in terms of practices, such as *dawa* or *ibadat*, and partly in terms of fundamental beliefs or truth claims, Amar Lasfar insisted that practice followed belief:

Pour être musulman, déjà, il faut croire d'abord. C'est-à-dire croire en Dieu, croire à ses Prophètes, reconnaître qu'il y a un certain nombre de voies religieuses. C'est la première question. Deuxième question: la pratique, il faut pratiquer. Il faut croire et pratiquer..., parce que déjà le premier pilier de

¹⁰⁶ In Christianity, the term Paraclete (often translated 'Comforter') is usually used to refer to the Holy Spirit.

¹⁰⁷ *Surah Al Ra'd*, 13: 3; *Surah Ya Sin*, 36: 36.

l'Islam..., c'est le témoignage *chahada*. Le témoignage de ça, c'est croire: *achhadou anna la-ilaha illa Allah*. Donc vous manifestez une croyance, que vous croyez en Dieu, et à son Prophète. Donc être musulman a un caractère public. Le reste maintenant, les autres devoirs musulmans, à mesure, c'est la prière, l'aumône, le jeûne, le pèlerinage....¹⁰⁸

The second category of meanings attached to Islam, or what it meant to be Muslim, which I identified at the beginning of this section, was an emphasis on an internal, personal, subjective, experiential, existential reality. One time when I went to the Halaqah circle in Glasgow, Akbar was leading a study from *Surah Al-Furqan*, and made the point that the day is for working and for enjoying the daylight which is a gift of Allah, and the night is for resting ('And it is He Who made the Night and the Day to follow each other: for such as have the will to celebrate His praises or to show their gratitude'¹⁰⁹). On the other hand, he continued, the prayers which are said in the mosque are only an external part of Islam—the 'real Islam' is what is done in private, when Muslims can take their time over their prayers or say them quickly to get them out of the way, and at night, when those 'who spend the night in adoration of their Lord prostrate and standing ... say: Our Lord! Avert us from the Wrath of hell, for its Wrath is indeed an affliction grievous'.¹¹⁰

One participant, Yusuf, who was particularly anxious to make me feel welcome started explaining more about the Qur'an to me, that it was important to read it in the

¹⁰⁸ 'To be a Muslim, to begin with, it is necessary to believe. That is to say, to believe in God, in His Prophets, to recognise that there are a certain number of religious ways. That's the first question. Second question: practice, it is necessary to practice. It is necessary to believe and practice..., because, to begin with, the first pillar of Islam ... is the *shahada* witness. The evidence of that is believing: *ashadu anna la-ilaha illa Allah* [I bear witness that there is no god but Allah]. So you demonstrate a belief, that you believe in God, and in His Prophet. So being Muslim has a public character. Now, the rest, the other Muslim duties, in due course, are prayer, almsgiving, fasting, pilgrimage....'

¹⁰⁹ *Surah Al-Furqan*, 25: 62.

¹¹⁰ *Surah Al-Furqan*, 25: 64-5.

'first person' (what does it say to me?), how he had done that and 'became' a Muslim (even though he had already practised) three years before, and how important it was to search for the truth, which was to be found in the Qur'an. He believed that that was the reason for my being there—it was part of my own subconscious search for truth which leads people to the Qur'an.

Akbar and Yusuf were both expressing an internal view of Islam, but it was still based on a propositional understanding. The internal view was expressed in a more radical way by Naïm, for example, who said that, although he was a believer (*croyant*), he could not express precisely what he believed, he could not express his beliefs in propositional terms as believing x, y, z.... Jean expressed it even more strongly still, and in a very positive way, talking of an interior, 'individualistic' Islam, which was not 'mosque-based'—he hardly ever went to the mosque, though he did pray and performed the fast of Ramadhan—but an internal relation with God. He believed that it was possible to listen to God, in a manner of speaking, by ceasing the 'internal dialogue' with oneself. This led to a communion with others who believed in God, and was therefore entirely compatible with Christianity:

... je suis musulman, mais, tout en même temps, attaché au Christianisme.... Il y a des gens comme moi, qui sont très très minoritaires, ceux qui croient en Dieu, qui ont une idée très libérale de l'Islam, mais qui n'appartiennent pas à la communauté musulmane, qui sont très pensifs dans leurs façons d'être, dans leurs façons de vivre etc., mais pour qui la religion musulmane reste au niveau intime. C'est-à-dire très très intime. Ce qu'on ne partage même pas avec son conjoint, c'est sa religion, sa relation avec Dieu. Mais je peux être avec quelqu'un quand je suis en train de prier Dieu, mais sans qu'il le sache. C'est

parce que c'est quelque chose qui m'appartient.... J'essaye de cultiver ma relation avec Dieu tout en m'orientant et vers l'Islam et vers le Christianisme, parce qu'ils m'aident. C'est une approche individualiste.... Quand on est croyant en Dieu, il y a systématiquement une communion. Le fait que quelqu'un croit en Dieu, qu'il soit chrétien, juif ou musulman, pour moi on a quelque chose en commun. On croit en Dieu..., on peut avoir l'échange.¹¹¹

So there are a number of different ways in which the nature and meaning of Islam are understood, and in which Islam is expressed. This must be emphasised, as it is a crucially important theme of this thesis. However, to see if it really has a significant *and* diverse influence on Muslim identities, we must look at some sources of Muslim identities. The next section looks at a number of these sources, *inter alia* Muslim history, international affairs, the influence of prominent individuals, umbrella organisations and youth organisations, education and travel, primary religious socialisation in the family, conversion to Islam, and the construction of Muslims' geographical environments.

6.4. Sources of Muslim identities

According to Ali, one of the aims of the Halaqah circle was to train people in speaking about Islam, which is why he was always trying to persuade people who did not

¹¹¹ '... I am Muslim but, at the same time, attached to Christianity.... There are people like me, who are a very small minority, those who believe in God, who have a very liberal idea of Islam, but who don't belong to the Muslim community, who are very thoughtful in their ways of being, in their ways of living etc., but for whom the Muslim religion remains at an intimate level. What one doesn't share, even with one's partner, is one's religion, one's relationship with God. But I can be with someone else when I am praying to God, but without him knowing. That's because it's something which belongs to me.... I try to cultivate my relationship with God by turning myself both towards Islam and towards Christianity, because they help me. It's an individualistic approach.... When someone believes in God, there is systematically a communion. The fact that someone believes in God, whether he is Christian, Jew or Muslim, for me we have something in common. We believe in God..., we can share something.'

see themselves as 'experts' or 'scholars' to participate, either by talking about a Hadith or a special topic (these ranged from fasting and *jihad* to Palestine and aspects of Muslim history). These talks were often interesting in their own right, but, from the point of view of this thesis, they were particularly interesting because they constitute, in various ways, some of the sources of Muslim identities.

The history of Islam often came into these discussions. Once, the talk was about *jihad*—not only is it necessary to do *jihad* for the right reasons, it is also necessary to do it in the right way. The speaker said that during the crusades, the Christian armies took Jerusalem with a great deal of slaughter, of men, women and children. The Muslim armies killed only a few. According to Fouad, at the time of Muhammad, the Muslims would send ultimatums to other states: they could either accept Islam, allow Muslim preachers to come and tell them about Islam, or there would be war. In one case, war went ahead without the other state being given this choice, and when this was drawn to Muhammad's attention, he ordered his army to withdraw, and then gave them the choice. They accepted Islam because they were amazed at this code, and wanted to follow the same religion. When the Muslim heartlands were invaded by other powers, the invaders often ended up turning to Islam, and this is (allegedly) a case unique in history.

At the time, I noted that they often tell these stories to encourage one another, but it is also a concrete example of my argument, in sections 5.4 and 6.4, that history can be a source of Muslim identities (the centrality of the Arabian peninsula to Muslim identities is the example which was given in section 5.4). Ismael, a tea room proprietor in the Fives district of Lille, told me that at the time of Muhammad, the Jews and Christians were protected and got on well with the Muslims. Among the pagan tribes, there had been a tradition of burying women alive with their husbands when they died, but Muhammad had put a stop to this. Such stories, which do have a basis in history, are useful means of

giving Muslims a sense of security or even pride in their faith, particularly by countering criticisms from the West about the alleged intolerance of Islam, and its treatment of women. Sometimes, the imagined history is as important as verifiable history. Ismael also told me that Muhammad was born with a ring on his back, which fulfilled a prophecy about the last Prophet, that a Jewish rabbi recognised the fulfilment of this prophecy, announced that this was the last Prophet, and other signs which had been prophesied occurred, such as the sea rising, and other freaks of nature as far away as Persia.

But the present day is also a source of Muslim identities. Current affairs, particularly in relation to Palestine, Algeria, Bosnia and other situations where Muslims perceive a part of the *ummah* as subject to oppression, have a powerful impact on Muslim identities. Material from Muslim newspapers and magazines which I collected in the United Kingdom, and even more so in France, showed a particular preoccupation with such international issues. This points to Islam as world consciousness, that is, it positions Muslims *vis-à-vis* British subjects or French citizens, but it also indicates that world consciousness is a source as well as an aspect of Muslim identities. In some cases, this can have the consequence of creating a belief that Muslims are all victims, which can ultimately breed an unhealthy combination of resentment and passivity in response to the new world order. In other cases, it drives Muslims to action, for example collecting money for Muslims in Bosnia, or helping to provide refuge for them in the United Kingdom (as has happened in Glasgow—see McFarland 1994), and creates a more profound and sceptical analysis of the same new world order than seems to be prevalent in Western societies.

In the present day, Muslim identities are also constituted through the writings and talks of prominent individuals, such as Ahmed Deedat, who I mentioned earlier, and

more 'liberal' thinkers like Soheib Ben Cheikh (who is the Grand Mufti of Marseilles), or even Tariq Ramadan, through his writings on Islam and *laïcité* (though the French government at one time managed to regard him as a dangerous fundamentalist and banned him from entering France). The Islamic Society of Britain (ISB) is one umbrella organisation which has been prominent in organising talks in the United Kingdom, particularly through the annual Islam Awareness Week. Their leaflet states:

The Islamic Society of Britain (ISB) was launched in June 1990. Our membership demonstrates the diversity of the Muslim community in Britain and the unity of Muslims regardless of nationality, race or language.

We believe that Islam should shed its image of the 'immigrant religion' but should instead be seen as a new hope and a campaign against social injustice and exploitation.

The ISB is not just another organisation, rather it is a movement which endeavours to contribute towards building a better Britain for everyone, through Islam. Our priorities and concerns are geared towards the British society where we live, work, and where we hope to contribute positively to the common good of all citizens.

Islam, if followed in its totality can give rise to a society where the life, property and honour of everyone, irrespective of their religion, race, language or colour, is protected, and where no one will be victim of injustice or oppression. It is the vision of such a society that ISB is committed to. Since our inception we have managed to emerge as a nation-wide movement, establishing branches and circles in many towns and cities throughout the UK.

The structure and programme of work caters for all members of the community; men, women and children.

In Glasgow, Islam Awareness Week has generally consisted of exhibitions and talks. In 1996, talks were given on the subjects: marriage and family life (Dr. Muneer Ahmed); Islam and science (Dr. Salah Beltagui); Islamic economy (Sahib Mustaqim); Muslim food rules (Michael Barry, from BBC Food and Drink); human rights in Islam (Azzam Tamimi); and law and order (Dr. Fareed Shayal). In 1997, talks were given on the subjects: moral values in Islam (Gamal Zarabozo, from the USA); family life (Sahib Mustaqim); women in Islam (Tahmeena Saleem); and the history of Islam in Britain (Sarah Joseph). Some of these people travelled to Glasgow from London, or from as far afield as the USA, and there was a sense of excitement among the Muslims present about being addressed by people who were considered to be highly knowledgeable. One talk, which was jointly organised by the ISB and Young Muslims UK, was on the subject of Christ in Islam, and the chair introduced the speaker with a long list of his credentials, his knowledge of and passion for comparative religion. As it happened, a few Muslims commented to me afterwards that he wasn't very good, and a number of Christians who were present became very angry. Nevertheless, this illustrates the way in which aspects of a Muslim identity can be affected by the inspiration of a prominent individual, but in a completely different way from Sheikh Nazim, whose role I discussed earlier. It also illustrates the significance of umbrella organisations and youth organisations as sources of Muslim identities.

Divisions between French Muslims, and the need to negotiate more effectively with the government, led to a number of attempts to create a representative body for Muslims in France. The CORIF (*Conseil de Réflexion sur l'Islam en France*) was established by

and answerable to the Ministry of the Interior (the minister at the time being Pierre Joxe), and it made certain recommendations regarding the State's attitude to Islam and the needs of Muslims. Amar Lasfar, the rector of the Mosquée de Lille Sud, was a member of the CORIF. For him, the establishment of an *Islam de France*—based on the idea that Islam is flexible, can be adapted to the surrounding culture, and must be explained in these terms—is a priority. This is one source of an awareness that Muslim identity and French identity are not incompatible, but rather (to use Amar Lasfar's dictum), '*un bon musulman est un bon citoyen*'.¹¹²

Amo Ferhati focused on this issue as well, though he had very different ideas about it. For him, Islam could not be seen solely in spiritual terms, nor could an *Islam de France* be articulated without Muslims taking the initiative to establish their own institutions to speak on their behalf. The CORIF could not be seen in these terms, and the Dunkirk council of mosques, which Pierre (who participated in the *Groupe Islamo-Chrétien* and other forums for inter-religious dialogue) enthusiastically described as a *dialogue interislamique*, was too limited to spiritual matters:

Le CORIF..., c'était le début du début du début de quelque chose. Le Parti Socialiste nous a baisés. Joxe nous a baisés..., il a rien fait. Il a créé le CORIF, et il n'a rien fait. Il a voulu récupérer l'Islam de France. Pasqua a fait la même chose, en allant plus loin, mais il a échoué aussi.... Dunkerque, c'est un conseil des mosquées, mais qui est très limité sur le plan technique et rituel. C'est-à-dire, avoir un carré musulman au cimetière, des petites choses comme ça. Ça n'a pas eu une dimension politique globale, c'est plus religieux et technique.¹¹³

¹¹² '... a good Muslim is a good citizen.'

¹¹³ 'The CORIF ... was the beginning of the beginning of the beginning of something. The Socialist Party screwed us. Joxe screwed us..., he did nothing. He created the CORIF, and he did nothing. He wanted to recuperate the *Islam de France*. Pasqua did the same thing, while going further, but he failed as well.... Dunkirk is a council of mosques, but which is very limited to technical and ritual issues. In

Abdallah was the *responsable* of *Jeunes Musulmans de France* in Tourcoing, just outside Lille. As such, he was involved in the organisation of cultural activities, *conférences* (public lectures or debates), and he would also speak in mosques and translate the Friday sermon in the Lille Sud mosque from time to time. They organised a meeting on the subject '*Être Musulman au Quotidien*', at which there were two *conférences* (one on the subject of the meeting, an other on the 'realities and inspirations of young Muslims'), a round table and some drama, *animations* and music. The round table included one Catholic priest (Jacques) and a *laïc* (Amo Ferhati). When I asked Abdallah why they were included, he replied (as I indicated above), that part of the ethos of relating to others was the principle of openness, and that Muslims had to be open to wisdom no matter where it came from.

Fatima said that, for her, openness, or a more complex relationship (*rapport plus compliqué*) with Islam, came from a combination of travel and education. She told me that she was Muslim, but she would keep her distance (*garder la distance*). In other words, she was from a Muslim family, but not a practising Muslim herself, though if she were to choose a religion it would be Islam. She also said that she knew a bit about Senegalese Islam. I asked her about this, and she said she had been to Senegal twice on holiday. She noticed a number of differences—the practices, e.g. prayer and fasting—were the same, but they were integrated into *their* culture, the Islam practised was in general more harmonious, '*détendu*', and not so all-encompassing. They had local holy places and, although they were very practising, they were not so austere as in the Maghreb, and the women were not veiled. She had also been in North Africa and Andalusia, and said that North African Muslims had a stronger *rapport* with the religion,

other words, having a Muslim plot at the cemetery, little things like that. It hasn't had a global political dimension, it's more religious and technical.'

and the veil was worn much more often. She saw herself as neither French nor Algerian—although she was born in France and was closer to French culture and society, she found her place in Islam, but an individual Islam. She talked about people's first names and the question of identity. She seemed to be implying that Muslims should adopt, for themselves or their children, French names rather than Arab-Muslim ones, but when I tried to clarify this she seemed less sure. She compared this with the Black Muslims in the USA, religion as something to underline a separate identity, almost more to do with what you are *not* than with what you are. But it is difficult to be a Muslim in France—in comparison, it seemed to her to be much easier in the United Kingdom, and Senegal, she said slightly tongue-in-cheek, was the ideal.

In many cases, the source of Muslim identity was perceived to be the family, either through an inculcation of Muslim practices and values, or simply through being born Muslim, that is, as a religious affiliation. In other cases, it was through conversion. Selwyn, who was an artist by training, told me about his conversion to Islam. He had had a Christian upbringing, but had problems with the doctrines of the trinity and the deity of Christ, so he was attracted by the Qur'anic references to 'Jesus, son of Mary'. Becoming a Muslim had led to change in his lifestyle, but he considered himself much like anyone else except for not going out to the pub on Friday evenings, which he didn't really miss anyway, and he admitted that he had problems with his boss at work (in an electrical shop) because of his sometimes 'coarse' humour. Another Scottish convert to Islam, Edward, was clearly quite eccentric, but he had some fascinating insights into Islam, not always expressed in a serious way (much to the exasperation of some other participants in the Halaqah circle). For example, he found it quite funny that I should consider Muslims a social group, which he determined was clearly the case since I was a sociologist studying Muslims. He also pointed out with great delight that Muslims were

terrible timekeepers, and he would never know how they managed to travel the world. One time, when they were discussing the relevance of the Hadith, he got straight to the heart of the issue with the simple statement, 'so Qur'an is Hadith'. This started a lively argument, but it was an example of the perception that converts are able to separate the core of the religion from the cultural baggage, and that conversion is therefore a more authentic source of a Muslim identity. It is not only converts who have this view. In support of this assertion, we could cite the example of Yusuf (see above) who argued that he had 'become' a Muslim through reading the Qur'an 'in the first person', even though he had a Muslim upbringing, and had practised for many years. He wanted to be a convert, even though he was a 'born' Muslim, because he saw this as a more authentic way of being Muslim.

Ismael was born in Morocco, but moved to France and married a French woman in 1990. She was not a Muslim when they got married, and was worried by the prospect of going to Morocco to meet the in-laws, because she thought there would be lots of snakes and scorpions there. Anyway, they went, and she was very impressed with the welcome from the family. After a few days, he asked her if she had seen snakes and scorpions, and she hadn't. She became a Muslim while she was there—I don't think this was specifically because she hadn't seen snakes and scorpions, but he mentioned this at the same time. After coming back, she asked him to get her a copy of the Qur'an in French, and she has gone to a women's class in Islam at the Lille Sud mosque. Ismael wanted to emphasise that she became Muslim through a free choice, since a woman of the *Ahl al-Kitab* ('people of the book', principally Christians and Jews) who is married to a Muslim man is not obliged to become Muslim.

A couple of other interviewees spoke about French converts to Islam. Fatima insisted that converts came from different backgrounds and social classes, but that they

were not always accepted by the North African Muslims. So some would try to adapt to North African cultural values as well—Amo Ferhati even said that they were ‘crazier than the Arabs’ (*plus fous que les Arabes*)—while others would strongly insist that Islam was something which transcended ethnic or national distinctions or values. Since Ibrahim was a member of the Naqshbandi Sufi order, I asked him if he thought many French converts to Islam were attracted by Sufism. He replied that many converts who converted to Islam through an intellectual search, rather than through contact with Muslims or an attraction to a Muslim way of life, could be found in the Sufi orders (*confréries*).

The final source of Muslim identity which I want to identify is locality. As I mentioned in Chapter 4, I tried to find some supporting circumstantial evidence for my impressions about the perception of exoticism by mapping the geographical locations of mosques, ‘*halal*’ butchers, other Muslim-owned businesses catering specifically for Muslims (such as tea rooms and cafés, Islamic bookshops, and Muslim undertakers), and the ‘Muslim culture industry’ (that is, restaurants and businesses which seek to sell commodities associated with Muslim countries to French ‘non-Muslims’) in Wazemmes. The locations of the different mosques and *salles de prière* in Lille, and the boundaries of Wazemmes, can be seen in Figure 6.1. The mosques, as numbered, are:

1. Mosquée de Lille Sud (al-Imân), rue de Marquillies, Lille Sud
2. Mosquée Badr, rue d’Arras, Lille Sud
3. Mosquée al-Hudâ, rue Pierre Loti
4. Mosquée as-Sunnah, rue Paul Lafargue, Wazemmes
5. Mosquée al-Fath, rue Dr. Yersin, Wazemmes
6. Mosquée al-Nour, rue de la Mitterie, Lomme

7. Mosquée al-Wifâq, rue Verhaeren, Mons-en-Baroeul
8. Mosquée at-Taqwâ, rue de Lannoy, Fives
9. Mosquée de Lille (al-Furqân), rue du Faubourg de Roubaix, Lille
10. Mosquée at-Tawiba, rue Offenbach, Villeneuve d'Ascq

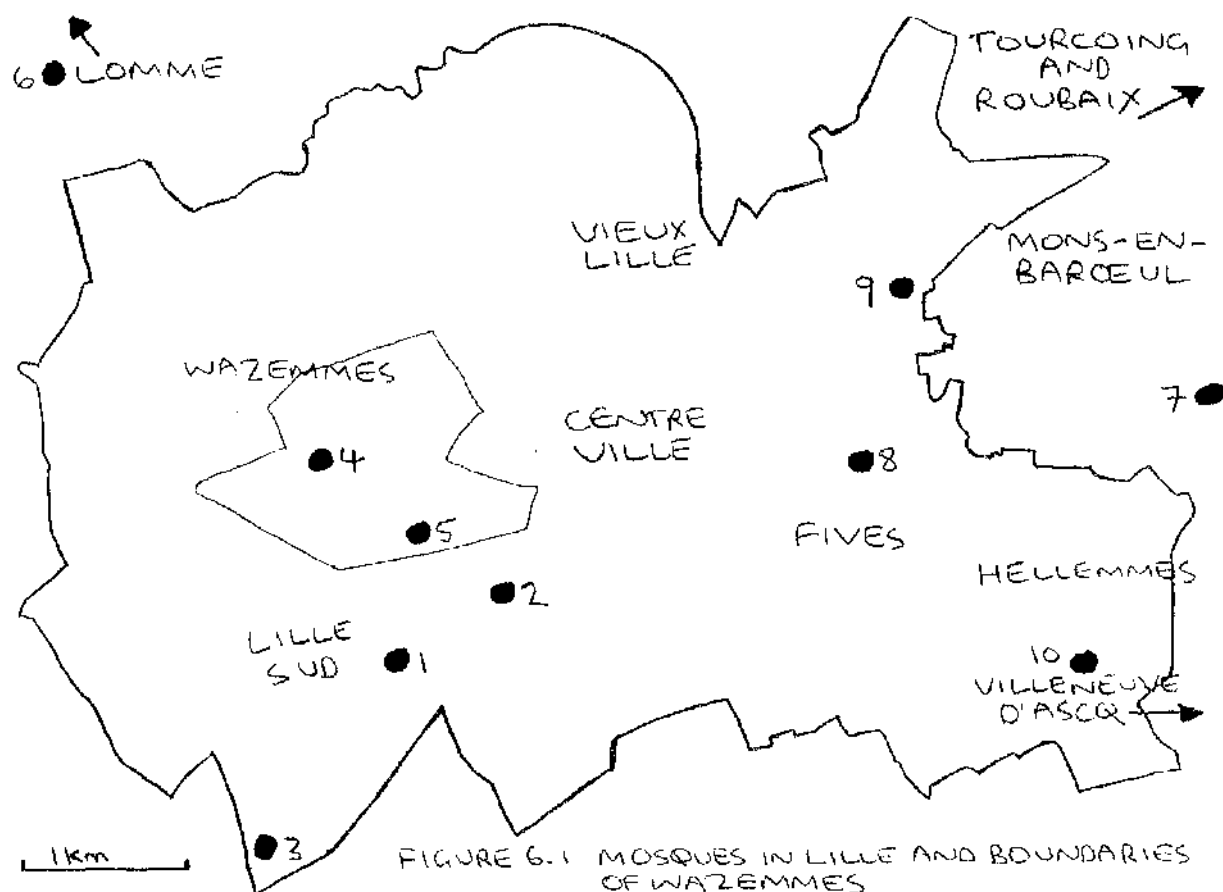


FIGURE 6.1 MOSQUES IN LILLE AND BOUNDARIES OF WAZEMMES

It is interesting to note that the mosques in Lille are quite spread out, but that there are none in Vieux Lille, which is where the Arab quarter used to be. Indeed, there are scarcely any signs of Arab-Muslim influence in that district any more. In contrast, two of Lille's mosques are situated in Wazemmes itself, and another two, including the prestigious Lille Sud mosque, are within a kilometre. As can be seen in Figure 6.2, the

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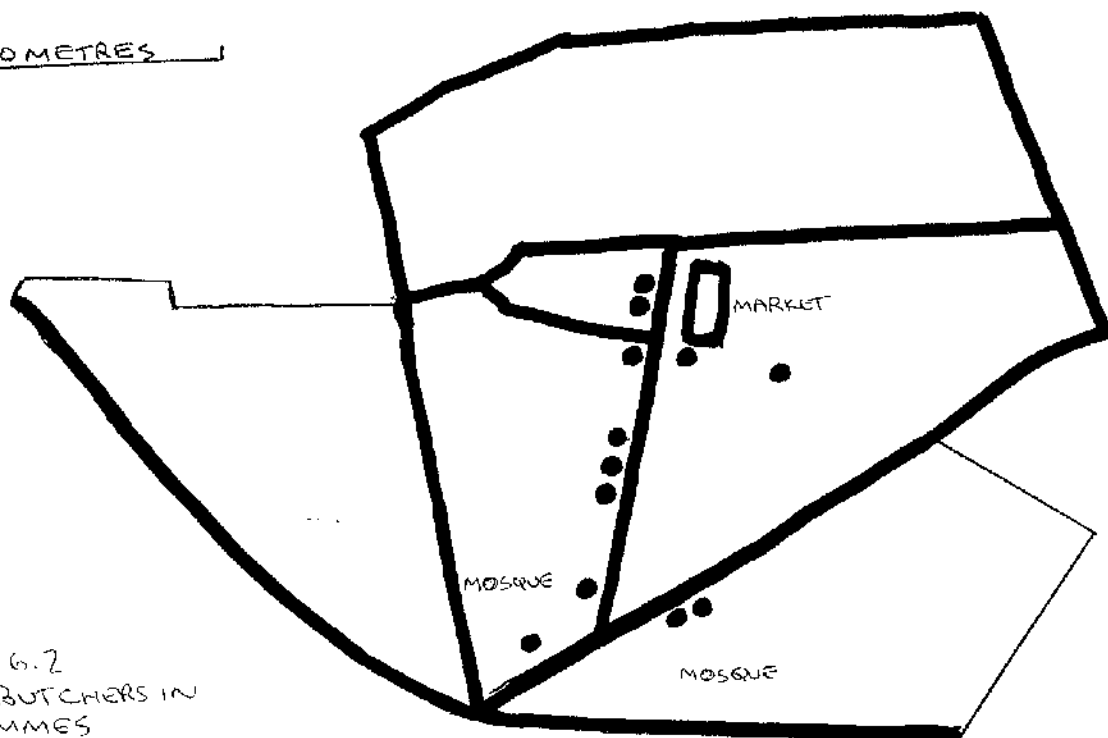


FIGURE 6.2
HALAL BUTCHERS IN
WAZEMMES

'halal' butchers are concentrated in a central area of the district, many around the market place, and others in between the two nearby mosques. As Figure 6.3 shows,

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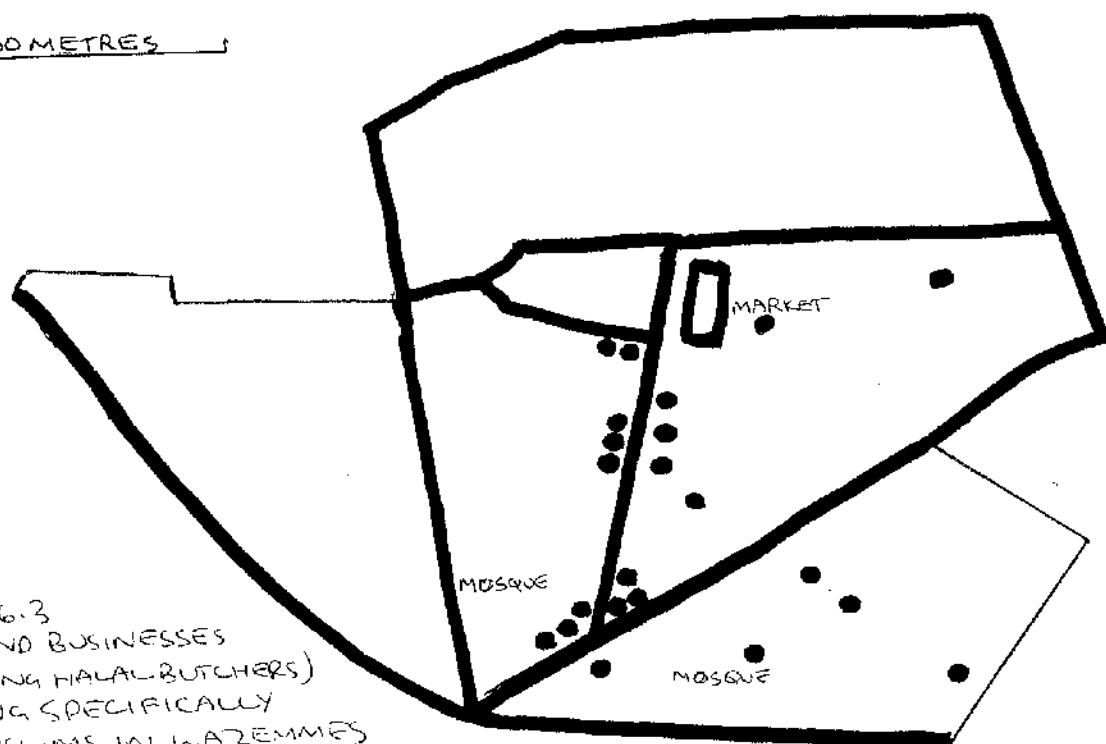
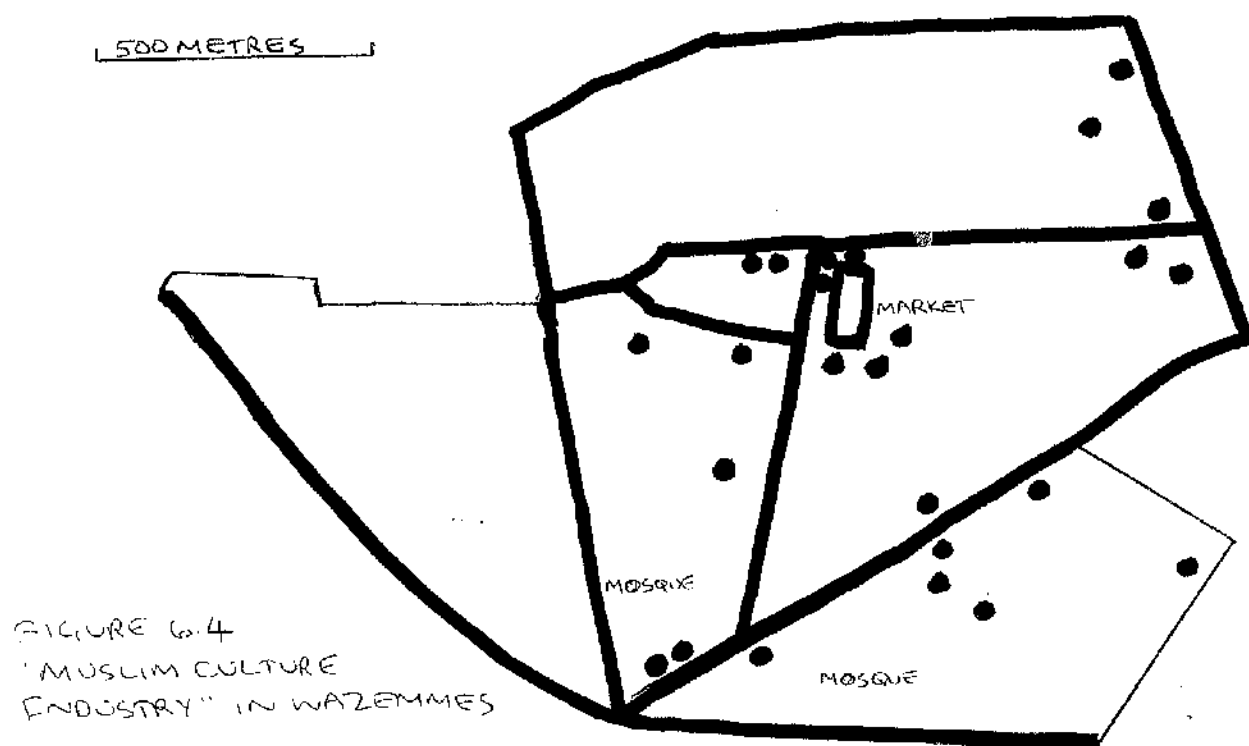


FIGURE 6.3
SHOPS AND BUSINESSES
(EXCLUDING HALAL BUTCHERS)
CATERING SPECIFICALLY
FOR MUSLIMS IN WAZEMMES

other businesses catering specifically for Muslims are concentrated in the same areas, though some can be found to the south-east, in the direction of the *Badr* mosque in *rue d'Arras*, and others to the north-east, in the direction of the town centre. Nevertheless, these sites are concentrated, which lessens the amount of contact with 'non-Muslim' French people. Although direct contact does not necessarily result in a more accurate image, the probability that a more accurate image of Muslims will spread is even lower when there is no contact. As Figure 6.4 demonstrates, the 'Muslim culture industry' is much more spread out throughout Wazemmes, especially as one nears the town centre of Lille (though it has not influenced the middle-class residential area in the north of



Wazemmes, or the *HLMs*¹¹⁴ in the west). It is in such town centre areas that images of Muslims will be the most influential among French 'non-Muslims'. As was pointed out in Chapter 4, the public image of the exotic stereotype seems to have continued, to some extent, in the culture industry. Perhaps this indicates a specific perception of perceptions: Muslims perceive the Western perception of them to be based on exoticism, so they make use of this in order to make a living and integrate their culture with the surrounding culture. This is a key point, and reflects the issue raised by Cesari (1994: 14), that Muslims present themselves to others with particular goals, and the role of the sociologist is to ask how they do this, and what are these goals, rather than what is Islam. To some extent, this has the consequence of influencing media representations of Islam, so that they contain a mixture of familiar Orientalist stereotypes, a concern with 'authentic' Muslim culture, and an emphasis on the political significance of 'immigrant culture' in France.

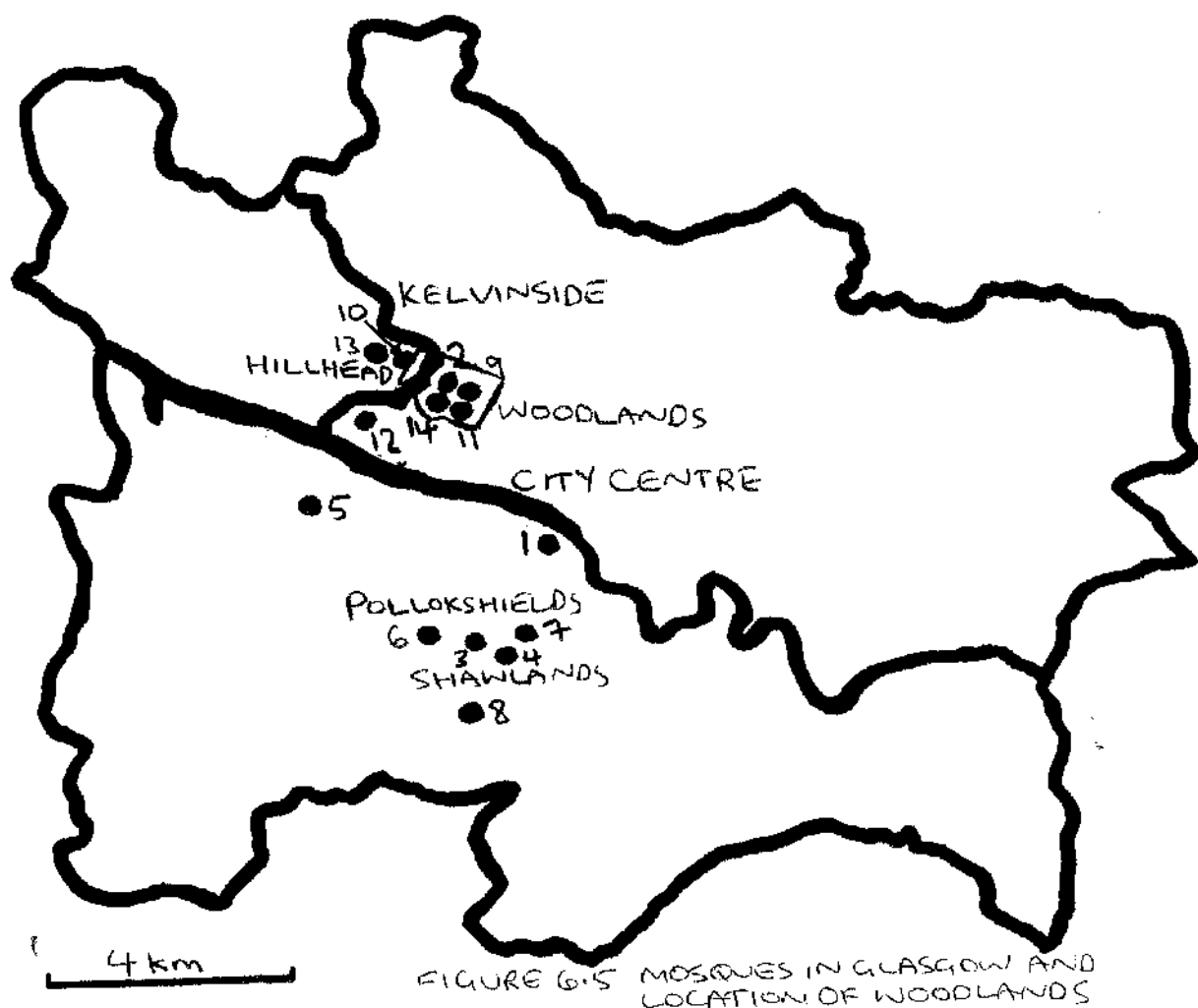
I did another study in the Woodlands district of Glasgow, which also has an important Muslim population, and found some similar patterns, though on a smaller scale. Figure 6.5 identifies the mosques and Muslim centres in Glasgow, and the boundaries of the Woodlands district.¹¹⁵ These mosques, as numbered, are:

1. Glasgow Central Mosque
2. UK Islamic Mission (Al-Furqan Mosque), Carrington Street
3. Masjid Noor, Forth Street
4. Langside Mosque (Madni Mosque), Langside Road

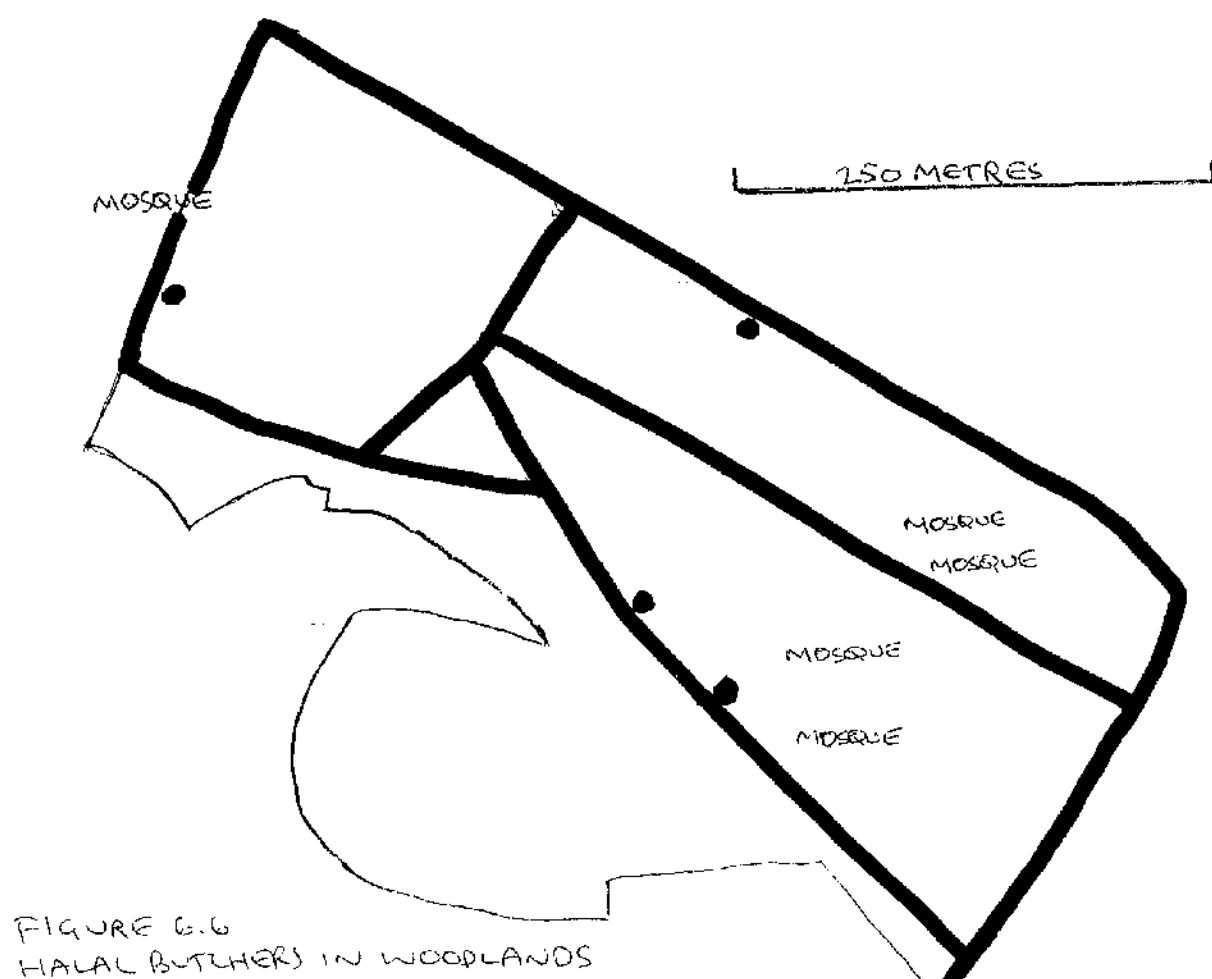
¹¹⁴ *Habitation à loyer modéré* - council flats

¹¹⁵ While the boundaries of Wazemmes are officially defined, those of Woodlands are not. At times, Woodlands has been a geographically-defined Council Ward, but the boundaries keep changing. The map in Figures 6.5 to 6.8 is a map of Woodlands as it is understood by local people. Although this is a less precise approach, it does not affect the conclusions of this research, as there are no comparable establishments (e.g. halal butchers) in the immediate vicinity.

5. Paisley Mosque (Madrassa Al-Arbia Al Islamia), Paisley Road West
6. Mudrasa Taleem-ul-Islam, Nithsdale Road
7. Central Mosque Khizra, Butterbiggin's Road
8. Masjid Jamia Islamia, Tantallon Road
9. Muslim House, Queens Crescent
10. Dawat-ul-Islam, Oakfield Avenue
11. Shi'a Mosque
12. Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission
13. Ismaili Society
14. Arlington Street Mosque



Again, we see that many of the city's mosques are in or near Woodlands, which is not surprising, as it has a similarly multicultural character, and compares well with Wazemmes. Most of the other mosques in Glasgow are on the South Side, in the districts of Shawlands and Pollokshields. Of those Muslims in Glasgow who live in the West End of the city, many live in the eastern half of Woodlands, where there are four mosques. Although, as we see in Figure 6.6, there are only four 'halal' butchers in



Woodlands, three of them are within 100 metres of a mosque. The other shops and businesses which cater specifically for Muslims, shown in Figure 6.7, are a bit more spread out, though they can generally be found in locations which surround the 'halal' butchers. On the other hand, the 'Muslim culture industry' (Figure 6.8) has tended to

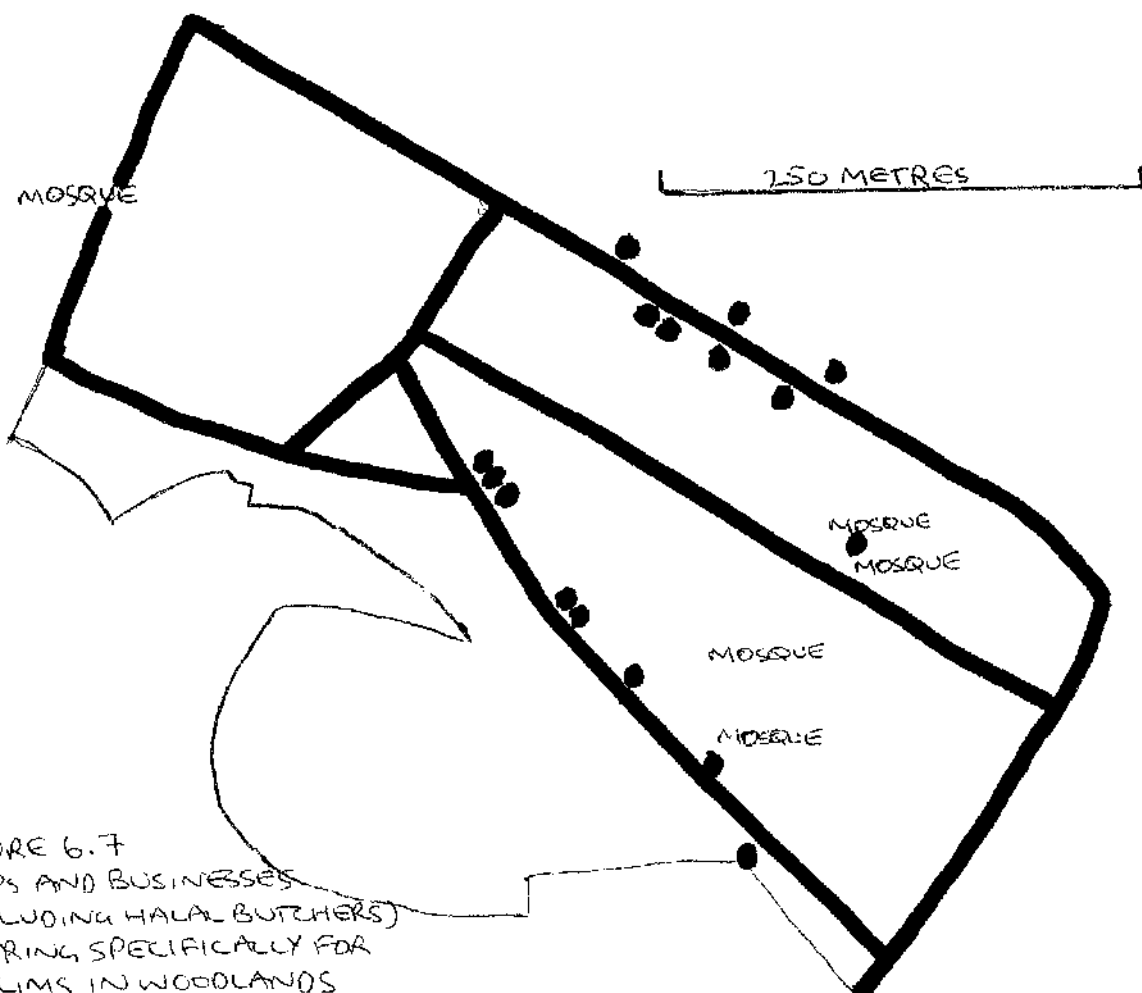


FIGURE 6.7
SHOPS AND BUSINESSES
(EXCLUDING HALAL BUTCHERS)
CATERING SPECIFICALLY FOR
MUSLIMS IN WOODLANDS

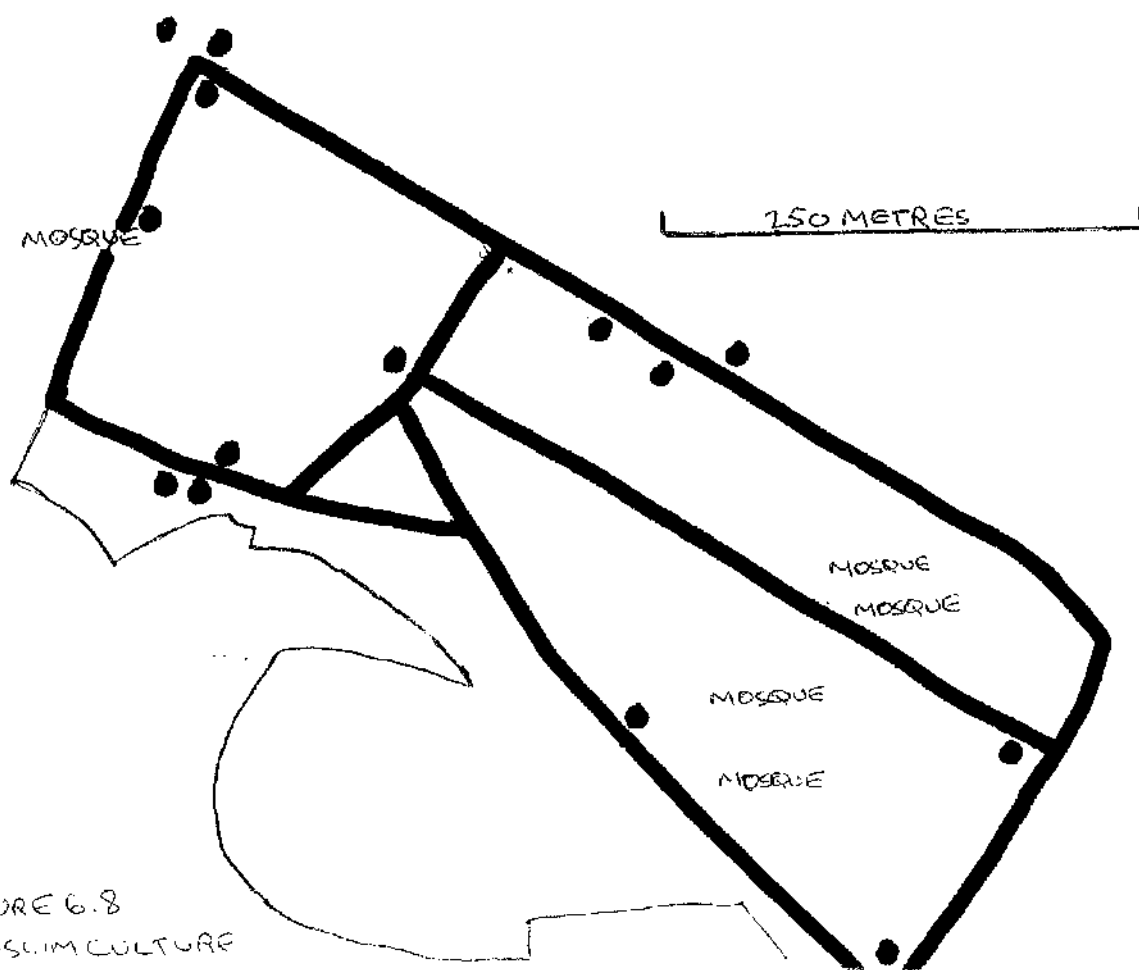


FIGURE 6.8
"MUSLIM CULTURE"

move away from the same locations, towards Kelvinside and Hillhead in the north and west. In contrast to Wazemmes, these districts are largely populated by professional people and students, so we can infer that the 'Muslim culture industry' will have an influence on the perception of Muslims among these specific groups of people.¹¹⁶ On the other hand, people of Asian origin in Woodlands belong to a number of different religious groups (Muslim, Sikh and Hindu), so it is probably the perception of 'Asians' which will be affected. Nevertheless, this is a way in which Muslims in Woodlands present themselves to others, with differing goals, and is therefore a source and expression of Muslim identities.

So there are diverse sources of Muslim identities—this section has identified history, current affairs, the writings and talks of prominent individuals, umbrella organisations, youth organisations, education, travel, the family, conversion, and locality --and these are often related to the ways in which Islam is understood and expressed. But Muslim identities do not exist in a void, they are always combined with other identities, and this adds further complexity and diversity. It is not possible to capture all of the complexity and diversity here—it is a difficult subject to gather data on but it is possible to signal some important issues which contribute to our understanding of the diversity of Muslim identities.

6.5. The combination of Muslim identities with other identities

According to Jacques, a Catholic priest, many young Muslims perceive Islam to be a valorising identity. They could be poor or unemployed, demotivated with nothing to get up for in the morning. But when they went to the mosque and heard the Imam telling

¹¹⁶ It may also be noticed that the 'Muslim culture industry' has more sites than the shops and businesses which cater specifically for Muslims. However, there is a strong element of subjectivity in these classifications, so we cannot really infer anything from this.

them 'you are Muslims', this was found to be very powerful, conveying motivation and a sense of worth, possibly the only identity which gave them value. Other identities would flow from, or be affected by this one. For example, when a young Muslim man gets married and starts a family, his identity changes from single to married and father of the family. Within a religious culture, these identities have specific meanings attached to them, so his other identities are transformed by virtue of his being a Muslim.

The combination of Muslim identities with other identities could be classified in three ways. Firstly, a 'Muslim-and-therefore' identity, such as the identity I have just described, demarcates an identity which is either contingent on, a necessary corollary of, or strongly affected by a Muslim identity. Secondly, a 'Muslim-and-nevertheless' identity describes a situation where the other identity is perceived to be in tension with the Muslim identity, perhaps undesirable, but nevertheless real and possibly unavoidable. Finally, there is a 'Muslim-and-also' identity, where the other identity is neither specifically Muslim, nor incompatible with Islam, but simply a different identity.

Although such a classification identifies real debates about the combination of Muslim identities with other identities, it may not be readily applicable to any analysis. This is because any other identity can be seen in either of these three ways, depending on the actor's point of view. In France, for example, the major issue of importance as regards the combination of Muslim identities with other identities, for writers and respondents, has undoubtedly been the question of nationality and citizenship, or being Muslim and French, which is central to debates about integration, assimilation and multiculturalism (see, for example, Wieviorka, ed., 1997; Lapcyronnie 1993; Crowley 1992). There are so many issues at stake here that I have devoted Chapter 7 to these issues, viewed in a British-French comparative perspective. Nevertheless, it is worth stating here that there has been a real debate about whether or not acquiring French

citizenship, for a Muslim, is an act of betrayal to Islam, or to the Muslim's allegiance to the *ummah*.

When I asked Ibrahim how he saw the situation of Muslims in France, he combined some comments about national identities with issues related to generation and the length of time which Muslims had spent in France. One popular theory which is expressed about Muslims in Western Europe is the 'three generations theory'. According to this theory, the 'first generation' migrate to Western Europe, intending to stay for a short period of time, so they maintain the same religious practices and cultural expressions, without seeking to adapt them to the country in which they find themselves. The 'second generation', being born in Western Europe, find that their cultural values are those of the surrounding society, so they rebel against their parents' unchanged values and practices, becoming much more Westernised and secular. *En revanche*, the 'third generation' find much more value in the religious identity, and emphasise this much more strongly, seeing their *raison d'être* as the Islamisation of life in the West, rather than the Westernisation of Muslim communities. As I commented earlier, Naima told me that there is often a problem with the 'freezing' of religion and culture among Muslims and other communities of migrant origin in the United Kingdom, that is, they ensure that things remain the same when they come to the United Kingdom, but they find that things have changed when they visit their country of origin. Nevertheless, I put it to Ibrahim that this 'three generations' theory was simplistic, and he agreed. He said that the 'first-generation' mothers often had reproduced the Algerian model, but not the fathers. While the mothers had spent a substantial time at home, the fathers had interacted more with French society, and had discovered (*'connu'*) alcohol and gambling, which were much more taboo in Muslim society. While this was particularly characteristic of the 'first generation' men in the 1970s, he said that they had begun to leave the cafés in the 1990s,

and return to the mosques. Often, this was because their sons had 'returned' to the mosques, and because religious practice—particularly attending the mosque for prayer and performing the *hajj*—provided a certain dignity which goes with age. So, the 'three generations' theory falls down at the 'first generation', or, at least, it is shown to be simplistic.

As I indicated, this was tied up with some questions of national identity, particularly between Algerians and Moroccans. Ironically, since Ibrahim was of Algerian origin, the Moroccans came out better in his discourse, which explained (from one point of view) the Moroccan ascendancy in many of the mosques. It was the Algerian men who had met in the cafés, and who had discovered alcohol and gambling, because they had the right under French law to open cafés and establish their own businesses. On the other hand, for the Moroccan men, the mosque was the main meeting place (*'leur lieu de rencontre'*), so they were better able to 'live' and 'integrate' their Islam in a more 'harmonious' way.

So these are a few examples of the difficulties and complexities which are added when Muslim identities are combined with other identities. It is not necessary to accept Ibrahim's analysis (indeed, some aspects of it are sociologically untenable, such as the unproblematic acceptance of national characteristics) in order to see that these difficulties and complexities are present. In some other cases, respondents were expressing ideas about the differences between the United Kingdom and France, particularly respondents in France when they knew where I came from. Before concluding this chapter, I want to cite briefly a few of these comparisons, which illustrate some important features of how Muslim perceive the West, and indeed how they perceive other Muslims.

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6.6. Comparative issues

There are three issues which I want to address here: the relationship between Islam and the customs of Muslim countries; the difficulties which are faced by Muslims in the United Kingdom and France *vis-à-vis* the surrounding societies; and sectarian influences.

On the first of these issues, Kahina, from Roubaix, spoke to me about her time in Glasgow. She was working in a newsagent's shop, which was owned by a man of Pakistani origin. When other men of Pakistani origin came into the shop, they would greet the owner, saying *al-salaam alaikum*. She replied *wa alaikum as-salaam*, and the men asked the owner why she was replying to them in this way. When they realised that she was Muslim, they seemed to understand, but Kahina felt that she was not accepted as Muslim because she was not Pakistani. Rachid, another Muslim from the Lille area who had also lived in Glasgow, felt the same way about the attitude of 'Pakistani Muslims'. The irony, as they both perceived it, was that they were of North African origin, and much closer to Arab culture and the Arabic language (despite the fact that Kahina was of Kabyle origin), than Urdu or Punjabi-speaking people of Pakistani origin.

Mustapha, who was from Mauritius, whose first language is French, and who had also lived in Grenoble, attempted to explain this type of situation. He pointed out that Muslims of Pakistani origin are the biggest group of Muslims in the United Kingdom and in Glasgow, so it is them who effectively run places like the Central Mosque, and much of Muslim culture in the United Kingdom is Pakistani Muslim culture. In France, this is different because of the North African dominance, which tends to encourage aspects of folk Islam, though he thought that the Barelwis seemed close to this, and admitted that there is folk Islam in Pakistan. Nevertheless, he insisted that the country of origin had a

significant impact on how Muslims 'fit in' to Western societies, while Islam itself was comparatively insignificant.

Mustapha and I discussed a lot of the differences between the situations of Muslims in the United Kingdom and France, and agreed on the significance of the *assimilation/multiculturalism* distinction. This leads us to the second point, difficulties faced by Muslims *vis-à-vis* British and French societies. Like many in both countries, Mustapha thought that the British approach was much more open. One popular belief was that it was easier to be Muslim in the United Kingdom than in France, and this was expressed by a wide variety of respondents—Muslim and 'non-Muslim', 'practising' and 'non-practising', Imams and 'ordinary' Muslims, men and women—on both sides of the Channel. Difficulties for Muslims in France which were often cited included the *affaire du foulard*, media and political discourses which associate Islam with terrorism, impediments to the construction of mosques, the rise of the *Front National*, and racism.

Although racism exists in both countries, Ismael attempted to contrast the basis for racism in France with that of the United Kingdom. He saw French racism as something which is strongly based on skin colour. For example, when he told a French person that he was Moroccan, the French person would keep a distance (though this didn't necessarily seem to be anything to do with skin colour). By contrast, in the United Kingdom this would depend on his behaviour (he seemed to be basing this on the bowler hat stereotype of the British). He said that 'Arabs' are much more convivial—they like to be with their friends and families, and to crack jokes at each other's expense, which the French would find insulting or even threatening. However, this is an unusual perception; a more common stereotype, in my experience, is that British racism is based on skin colour, and French racism is based on ability to speak French fluently and 'without an accent'.

Finally, on sectarian influences, I commented to Naïm that Islam in France appeared to be much less sectarian than in the United Kingdom, but he disagreed with me completely. There are two main mosques in Roubaix, where he lives and works as a social worker, the *Mosquée Ad-Dawa* in rue Archimède and the *Mosquée Abou Bakr* in place Faidherbe. According to Naïm, the Imams never agree on anything, one says black and the other says white. One Imam, for example, citing verses from the Qur'an and Hadith, will say that Muslims should boycott North African shopkeepers who sell alcohol in their shops, the other Imam will take a different line. Shortly before I interviewed Naïm, an Imam in Belgium, in a town just across the border, was calling everyone to a *jihad* (in the sense of holy war), but other Imams in the Lille-Roubaix-Tourcoing area have come out against that kind of statement. So there is a kind of sectarianism in France as well, which can influence the membership of particular umbrella organisations, as discussed earlier in this chapter, and be a source and expression of a diversity of Muslim identities.

6.7. Conclusion: Muslim identities as responses to Western representations

This chapter has identified numerous examples of Muslim identities—their sources, modes of expression, and significance—and ideal types which enable us to understand their complexity and diversity. The chapter has shown that there are a number of different ways in which the nature and meaning of Islam are understood, and in which Islam is expressed. It has shown that this has a significant and diverse impact on Muslim identities, because, firstly, there are diverse sources of Muslim identities, which are often related to the way in which Islam is understood and expressed, and, secondly, because Muslim identities are always combined with other identities, and this alters the

understanding and expression of the Muslim identity and the multiple identities of the Muslim.

The Muslim identities which I have described in this chapter often have elements of a response to Western representations of Islam. For example, a positive approach to *laïcité* is particularly well developed by the Muslim theologian Tariq Ramadan (1994), who recognises that Westerners often consider *laïcité* and liberty so intertwined as to be inseparable, but also argues that it has contributed to the demonisation of Islam, and to a Muslim reaction against the West. Also, I argued that the imagination of Muslim history often provides a means of countering Western criticisms of Islam, thus giving Muslims a sense of security and pride in their faith. Ahmed Deedat was particularly affected by the negative portrayal of Islam which he saw coming from Western Christian missionaries, and incorporated this into his defence of Islam through a similarly negative portrayal of Christianity.

What is particularly significant, however, is the contrast between the perception of Islam and Muslim identities as homogeneous, which was discussed in Part I of this thesis, and the rich diversity which has been discussed in this chapter. Sometimes this diversity leads to disagreements and divisions, sometimes to an appreciation of diversity. One useful way of looking at this diversity is to turn on its head the perception of Islam as static, and see Muslim identities as a constant attempt to 'juggle' (rather than synthesise) a number of different, sometimes opposite, aspects of Muslim life. These can include the secular and the religious, integration and specificity, unity and diversity, *maslak* and *ummah*, belonging and practice, upbringing and conversion, the propositional and the internal, history and the present, imagination and actuality, experience and youth, specifically Muslim identities and other identities, ethno-linguistic identification and faith, acceptance of authority and independence of thought.

In reality, however, we need to examine arenas where Islam and the West actually meet each other in order to grasp this dialectic. It is true that Islam is now a part of the West, and, in a way, that the West is a part of Islam in some of its manifestations. But there are many arenas where perceptions of the West, to a greater or lesser degree, exclude Islam. One of these is the perception of the West as being comprised of nation states, which necessarily exclude people of other national (Pakistani, Algerian) or para-national (*ummah*) identities from consideration as part of the nation *in the same way* as 'the rest of us'. Another is the educational sphere, which has often been seen as having a duty to transmit Western values, and this can alienate Muslim pupils, their parents and communities in different ways. Still another is the perception of the Christian West, which is at least related to the borders of Western Christendom in the eleventh century, and which, *a fortiori*, excludes people of another faith. These are arenas where we can examine the contemporary relations between Islam and the West, or between Orientalist representations and Muslim identities. Hence, the next three chapters address each of these arenas in turn, and each chapter begins at the point where this one ends.

7. Muslims and national identities

7.1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter, expressed in the briefest possible way, is to answer a deceptively simple question: what does it mean to be Muslim *and* French, or to be Muslim *and* British? The theoretical background to this chapter can be found in Chapter 5, in which I made four important arguments. Firstly, I argued that Muslim identities, like national identities, are progressive as well as regressive, because they look to the future as well as the past, and that all group identities are healthy and morbid, because they combine inclusion and exclusion, bringing to individuals a sense of belonging and self-worth, offset by a loss of identification with human society as a whole. Secondly, I argued that large-scale group identities are, in a sense, simulations of national identities, and that they must be understood in terms of their relationship with national identities. This would involve identifying their cultural, ethnic and religious foundations, and looking at the relative importance and meanings of cultural, ethnic, religious and national identities. Thirdly, I looked at the concept of the *ummah*, and cited the argument of Ron Geaves (1996: 10-27, 41-4), that it had evolved through different periods of Islamic history, from the small group of believers in Mecca to post-war labour migration to the West. I argued that at the end of the twentieth century, the *ummah* has become a non-territorial *nation* of the world's Muslims, defined either exclusively (as people who follow fully the pillars of Islam and the *sunnah*) or inclusively (as all who were born

Muslim). I argued that the exclusive definition had something in common with social nationalism, according to which one's national identity was defined in terms of conscious adherence to a nation, its culture, values, and destiny, and that the inclusive definition had more in common with ethnic nationalism, where national identity is considered to be transmitted through blood ties. Fourthly, I argued that Muslims in the West have been defined in racialised terms, for example 'Pakistani' or '*maghrébin*', terms which may connote an irreconcilable 'racial' difference based on a perception of somatic features, such as skin colour, and which have particular significance in the context of power relations in the West. Because of the centrality of the Arabian peninsula to Islam, and the origins of many Western Muslims in North Africa, Pakistan and elsewhere, Muslims in the West are defined as belonging elsewhere, while legitimated power belongs to those who are perceived as belonging here.

There is also an empirical background to this chapter, which can be found in Chapter 6. Section 6.5 was concerned with the combination of Muslim identities with other identities, and I suggested that, in this respect, the major issue of importance in France was the question of nationality and citizenship, or being Muslim and French, which is central to debates about integration, assimilation and multiculturalism. This is also relevant to the United Kingdom, as I shall demonstrate. In Chapter 6, I identified a threefold classification for the combination of Muslim identities with other identities, which were labelled a 'Muslim-and-therefore' identity (either contingent on, a necessary corollary of, or strongly affected by a Muslim identity), a 'Muslim-and-nevertheless' identity (where a degree of incompatibility is perceived between the two identities), and a 'Muslim-and-also' identity (neither specifically Muslim, nor incompatible with Islam, but simply different).

Following from this, there are several questions which this chapter addresses, with reference to empirical and theoretical data. What is the relationship between Muslim identities and national identities? What is the relationship between Muslim understandings of the *ummah* and of the nation? What are the cultural, ethnic and religious foundations of these relationships, and, in this respect, what is the significance of the racialisation of Muslims? And finally, what is the effect on the politics of integration, and debates about nationality and citizenship, in both the United Kingdom and France?

Although some of these issues may appear to be more relevant to France than the United Kingdom, questions about the nation are hugely important in United Kingdom politics (which is given an added poignancy by the fact that I am writing this in Scotland). For this reason, and because the United Kingdom material sheds light on the French material and *vice-versa*, this chapter, like others in this thesis, is structured in such a way as to enable me to intertwine the discussions of the United Kingdom and France at some points, while also analysing the two countries separately where appropriate. Firstly, then, I discuss the significance of national identities to Muslims, considering the concept of the *ummah* and the importance of unity to Muslims, the significance of national identities in so-called Muslim countries, and the identification of Muslim and ethnic identities which does sometimes take place. Following on from this, I discuss the combination of Muslim identities with national identities, suggesting that there is often a threefold tension between Muslim identities, identification with a Muslim country of origin, and identification with the Western country of residence. This also highlights the significance of migration as a variable which influences the construction and interaction of Muslim identities and national identities. Finally, I look at the politics of integration and multiculturalism, which is an area where there is an apparent contrast

between the United Kingdom and France (between multiculturalism and *intégration*), but where there is striking similarity of practice, and of issues which face Muslims in their everyday lives. Here, I consider the different models of the nation, the attitudes of Muslims to *intégration* and *assimilation* in France, comparisons with the United Kingdom through the eyes of Muslims on both sides of the channel, as well as my own, and the views of interviewees about how integration can be best accomplished, an issue which begins the conclusion to this chapter.

7.2. Islam and national identities

When we address these issues, we do so in the context of a world of nation states and national identities. As I have argued throughout this thesis, the construction of identities must be understood as a dialectic of Self and Other, in which we are constantly engaged. As this is also the case with national identities, we can say that they are, *in a sense*, rooted in basic human attitudes, and that they endure even as the nation state passes into history. As a result, it is possible that the decline of the nation state is leading to a kind of anomie, which results in people identifying themselves with a religious or national community, not necessarily congruent with a state. Such a community gives a sense of belonging, and the basis for a Self-Other dichotomy, leading to an emphasis on identity as well as gradual fragmentation, polarisation and conflict. Sami Zubaida (1993: 152-3) points to:

... one particular form [of Islam], specially relevant to popular attitudes, which is 'communalist' ideas and sentiments. This is Islam as an 'ethnic marker' marking the boundaries of a community (or 'imagined community') as against

others identified in terms of different religions. This form of communal identification, we may add, is quite common throughout the world, historical and modern. Communalist sentiments are often competitive, and under suitable conditions break out into open conflict and struggles.

In the Middle East, many Arab governments and Islamic groups assume that they have the right, even responsibility, to protect people outside their own national territories. The post-imperialist map of the Middle East has not been based on the principle of the nation state, and this has lent legitimacy to the allegiance of, say, a Shi'a Muslim in Beirut to the government of Iran, rather than Lebanon. Where nation-state hegemony has not been established, we should not be surprised that authority, and allegiance to authority, is informal and fragmented. Yet Middle Eastern states are expected to behave as if they were nation states, which maintains a degree of Western control over former colonial territories, and means that national identities within these states exist without the nation state. The alternative to nation-state nationalism may be an expanded ethnic dimension, but it may also be cultural, linguistic or religious. Islam is certainly becoming a powerful legitimator of supra-national identities, and therefore an important basis for a Self-Other dialectic, and an important factor in nationalistic conflicts. This may be the case with other religions as well, though my comments are of course confined to Islam and Muslim identities.

In fact, national identities do constitute a very particular dilemma for Muslims. On the one hand, they have played a leading role in liberating 'Muslim' countries from 'Western' rule, and in some cases this has led to some sort of Islamic government (though, of course, not all Muslims are convinced that this is a good thing). In a world of nation states, it seems as if Islam must ally itself with the nation in order to fulfil its

raison d'être as a total system, as *din wa dawla* (religion and government). On the other hand, the emergence of national identities has historically been part of a wider process which also includes secularisation, leading to a shift from religious identities to national identities, and there is a rare consensus on this point among writers on the subject of nationalism (see, for example, Anderson 1991: 9-19; Hobsbawm 1991: 67-79; McCrone 1998: 93; though cf. Hastings 1997: 185-209). Furthermore, national (and ethnic) sentiments or identities can undermine the unity of the *ummah*, and they can lead to a confusion of national or local customs with the values and practices of Islam, or even a subordination of religious imperatives to the expediency of the nation state.

There is an agreement here between the academic literature and the empirical data from my research. It was for reasons such as those just described that Abbas, a doctoral student in Glasgow who was from Iraq, insisted on the importance of distinguishing between Islam and specific countries which, though they were supposedly Muslim countries, had leaders who were 'against Islam'. They did respect Islam, he argued, but out of political necessity. Similarly, a letter to the *New Internationalist* made the following argument:

*Nationalism ... is one of those erroneous concepts which was innovated by European colonialists and then exported to their subordinates. I agree with Eric Hobsbawm who wrote that 'the world of the next century will be largely supranational'. I believe one of those Super-States will arise in the Muslim world very soon called the *Khilafah*, the Ruling system of Islam. Islam condemns nationalism vehemently. The Prophet Mohammed said: 'He is not*

one of us who calls for *asabiyyah* (nationalism) or who fights or dies for it.'

He also said: 'He who calls for nationalism is as if he bit his father's genitals.'¹¹⁷

There are three important problems with this argument. Firstly, it makes the error of characterising nationalism as *solely* a mechanism for repression—it is, in part, a mechanism for repression, but it is also an ideology which inspires liberation. Secondly, the belief in the *Khilafah* would be regarded as anachronistic or eccentric by many other Muslims. Thirdly, the writer confuses the seventh-century concept of *asabiyyah* with the modern concept of nationalism. In fact, as Erwin Rosenthal (1965: 18) points out, *asabiyyah* has not, in Muslim history, been considered fundamentally inimical to Islam:

'*Asabiya* is a concept of Ibn Khaldun's that has aroused the opposition of modern orthodox Muslim thinkers, who regard it as contrary to Islam. In fact, he stresses its significance, saying it is needed for the success of prophecy and of *da'wa*.... Its foremost role, however, he assigns to the power-state, for '*asabiya* is a corporate feeling; a common bond, due in the first place to ties of blood and family tradition, creating a sense of solidarity; it inspires common action and is an indispensable driving force in the formation of states and dynasties.

Nevertheless, the argument made in the letter to the *New Internationalist* is not uncommon, and it expresses an important aspect of Islam, which is a valorisation of unity and an opposition to factionalism. This can also be seen in the Hadith which says that the community of Muslims would split into seventy-three sects (*firaq*) after the death of

¹¹⁷ *New Internationalist*, 282, 1996, p.2.

Muhammad, of which only one would be saved, while the others went to hell (Chebel 1995: 316). The problem is that no isolated individual can express this opposition to factionalism in a way which has any impact, nor can one simply identify oneself with the whole *ummah* at the expense of identification with a particular group, a 'face-to-face community', of Muslims. In order to express this opposition to factionalism effectively, one must be part of a group with a strong consciousness of having a particular mission of restoring the unity of the *ummah*. In other words, paradoxically, one must be part of a faction. Bassam Tibi (1997: 219-20) expresses the dilemma between Islamic projects and ethno-national contexts as follows:

Now, the claim of Islamic fundamentalists is universal, but the realities they are operating within are related, among others, to ethnic, sectarian and national strife. Thus, in Islamic fundamentalism we can observe a mix of ethnicity, nationalism and sectarian rivalries (Sunna versus Shi'a) combined with a rhetoric of universal claims.

In theoretical terms, there is a parallel here between nationalism and Islam. Nationalism is always a fundamentally specific doctrine, that is, a doctrine which is articulated in connection with one particular state, territory or people. However, it also makes a claim to universality, that all people belong to a nation (a claim which demands some reflection to appreciate how astonishing it is), and that this is a universal law of historical development, or even the nature of things. In parallel, Islam as a political or quasi-political project is articulated in the context of the nation state, but it makes a universal claim on behalf of the entire *ummah*, or even the whole of humankind.

It is possible to take further the particularising aspect of this argument, and assert that the Islamic project is often the project of a particular ethnic group. For example, the Taleban in Afghanistan, often portrayed as the most 'extreme' 'Islamic fundamentalist' group which can be found, are almost entirely members of the Pashtun ethnic group, which also has connections to the ruling classes in Pakistan. This has been a source of conflict with other ethnic groups, particularly the Persian-speaking Tajiks in the province of Herat, who have accused the Taleban of attempting to establish Pashtun hegemony (Tirard-Collet 1997).

In order to understand this, and, more particularly, to understand the connection with Muslims and national identities in Western Europe, we must consider the following argument. When Islam is conceived as *din wa dawla* in a world of nation states, the ideal would be for the principles of nation-state government to follow the principles enunciated by Islam *qua* religion. In reality, however, the reverse may be the case, and anyone who does not belong to the national group would be perceived as an Other in religious as well as national terms. This is a logical argument, but there are empirical examples of it which have already been cited in this thesis. Kahina and Rachid both felt that they were not accepted as Muslim in Glasgow because they were not Pakistani. At the same time, they felt that this was ironic because their North African origin made them closer to Arab culture and the (sacred) Arabic language than people of Pakistani origin. So they felt that people of Pakistani origin, by identifying a Muslim religious identity with a Pakistani national identity, regarded them as Other, but at the same time *they* perceived Islam, to some extent, in terms of its relationship with an Arab (pan-)national identity.

Of course, the ideal for Muslims is expressed in the concept of the *ummah*, which connotes a community of the world's Muslims, in which differences of national or ethnic

identity are laid aside. As I argued in section 6.4, the preoccupation with international issues (such as Palestine or Bosnia) in many Muslim publications, and even informal discussions among Muslims, point to Islam as world consciousness, and this consolidates the idea of the *ummah*. When I talked with Abdallah on this subject, he argued that the *ummah* was a '*communauté de pensée*', that Muslims could not come together in the one country, but that their union, or community, became particularly tangible when they went to Mecca. He said that the *hajj* created an awareness that Muslims were a community which transcended not only national boundaries, but also time, since they were walking on the same ground, and round the same *Kaaba*, where the Prophet had been in the seventh century.

But, as Ali told me in Glasgow, Muslims are not always one *ummah*, because the difficulties of Muslims in one part of the world are often ignored by Muslims elsewhere. The *ummah* is simply too big to be a functioning community, and so Muslims more readily identify themselves with other Muslims *with whom they are in regular contact*. Frequently, this means members of their national and/or ethnic community.

7.3. The combination of Muslim identities and national identities

There is often a threefold tension between Muslim identities, identification with a Muslim country of origin (a Pakistani or Arab identity, for example), and identification with the Western country of residence (for example, France or the United Kingdom). Let us take a hypothetical example of a Muslim, born in the United Kingdom to parents who were born in Pakistan. His national identity is already subject to tension, because he wishes to assert that he is British, and therefore has the same formal rights in the United Kingdom as any other British person, while at the same time identifying himself with

Pakistan, where many of his relatives live, and where he perceives his roots as being. Because he has been born and brought up in the United Kingdom, he has met Muslims of many different origins, including British converts, and so he makes a clear separation between Muslim and Pakistani identities, which his parents do not. In reality, this is not merely a hypothetical example, but one which describes the situation of many Muslims, some of whom I have met.

There are different aspects of this situation in print. There have been many articles on Pakistan in magazines which are published for Muslims in the United Kingdom, like *Q-News* and *Trends*, and these magazines are directed at younger Muslims. However, there is also a noticeable distancing from Pakistan. The cover of one issue of *Trends* asked the provocative question: 'Pakistan: Was it a mistake?'.¹¹⁸ Another article in *Q-News* asserted that: 'Pakistan is becoming little more than a sentimental backdrop for a generation born and raised in Britain.' Samina, a Muslim woman who migrated from Pakistan to the United Kingdom in the 1960s at the age of seven, was interviewed for the article and described her own sense of identity in a way which is similar to the hypothetical example I have just given:

One day my friend dragged me along to the Central Mosque where I saw Muslims of different races and colours together for the first time, many of them intermarried. That was when it hit me that despite all our differences we all had something in common—our faith.

Suddenly being Muslim was more important than anything else. We all have multiple identities but there must be a dominant one. I found that Islam gave

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¹¹⁸ *Trends*, Vol. 7, Issue 4, n.d., p.1.

me direction, it gave me a sense of serenity and peace knowing who I am. I felt comfortable in a way that simply being Pakistani didn't allow me to feel.

That didn't mean severing the umbilical cord with my motherland. I was still Pakistani and Pathan. Part of me is also British. But my faith allows me to be all these things so long as I remember that Islam conditions all of them.¹¹⁹

As this example illustrates, Muslims often argue that there is no tension between their different identities, but that they are compatible in some respects and complimentary in others. The logical difficulties which this presents to the researcher are frequently overcome, or simply ignored, in everyday life. One documented example from the United Kingdom is of members of the Naqshbandi Sufi order, in their centre in London, wearing different coloured turbans which identify their nationality, as well as the fact that they are Muslims, Sufis, and members of the Naqshbandi order with an allegiance to Sheikh Nazim. Ali Köse (1996: 162-3) writes that: 'In general, Germans wear purple, English wear green, and black members wear red turbans. Green and white turbans are commonly worn by all nationalities; e.g. one can see a black member wear a green turban, but none of the Germans would wear a red turban.'

On what is perhaps a more mundane level, Hassan had been born in Algeria, but also claimed to be of French culture (*'je me prétends de culture aussi française'*) since his education had been in French, and he had 'deepened' his understanding of Islam (*'mon approfondissement en Islam'*) in France. Daoud told me that he had not been able to practice his Islam freely in Egypt, particularly since he was in the army, and that it was easier to practice in the United Kingdom. He was impressed with Western tolerance and freedom, something which many interviewees repeated. When I asked Abdallah what

¹¹⁹ *Q-News*, 275, 5-18 September 1997, p. 20-21.

Islam was for him, in the context of the common perception that being Muslim and French are mutually incompatible, he replied:

Je suis français, je suis né français, ça c'est une appartenance qui vient à tous qui habitent en ce territoire.... Donc c'est ça que nous voulons, mais, donc moi personnellement, chacun a une religion, chacun veut organiser sa vie communautaire, et moi, j'ai envie de l'organiser comme l'Islam l'a fixé, l'a établi. Donc, pour moi, l'Islam, c'est un mode de vie..., c'est de l'ordre du privé, mais ... l'Islam gère les relations publiques, les relations entre les gens.... L'Islam gère tout. Il gère les rapports sociaux. Il gère la personne depuis sa naissance jusqu'à sa mort, que ça soit à sa naissance, à son mariage, à son divorce (parce qu'il a des enfants). Il gère tout. Il gère tous les aspects de la vie de la personne. Il donne des directives à suivre dans les rapports avec ses voisins, dans les rapports avec les autres religions, avec les chrétiens, avec les juifs, dans ses rapports avec les autres en général.¹²⁰

So, for Abdallah, like Samina who is cited above, his Muslim identity was something which enabled him to clarify his other identities and social roles. But for him, and for many who argued that being Muslim and French at the same time was unproblematic, there was still the problem of how to unite the universality of Islam with the particular demands of French society. Amar Lasfar explained that Islam was a universal religion—

¹²⁰ 'I am French, I was born French, that is a belonging which comes to everyone who lives in this country.... So that's what we want, but, for me personally, everyone wants to organise their community life, and I want to organise it as Islam has fixed it, established it. So, for me, Islam is a way of life..., it's something private, but ... Islam directs relations in public, relations between people.... Islam directs everything. It directs social relations. It directs a person from birth to death, whether that be at birth, marriage, divorce (because the person has children). It directs everything. It directs all aspects of a person's life. It gives directives to follow in relations with neighbours, in relations with other religions, with the Christians, with the Jews, in relations with others in general.'

only one third of Muslims being Arabs—and that there were no differences between Islam in Morocco, France or Pakistan. However, the practice of Islam in any of these countries had to take account of the ‘particularities’ (*particularités*) of the country, both because Islam was flexible enough to accommodate cultural differences, and because it was important to avoid causing an affront to the society in question. As a practical example of this ethos, the Lille Sud mosque organised lessons to teach people French and Arabic, like many mosques in the United Kingdom which have classes in English, Arabic and Urdu. Amar Lasfar insisted that Arabic was taught as a living language which also enabled Muslims to learn their religion—although it was definitely a second language for those born in France, it enabled them to understand their history and culture ‘of origin’.

For others, however, there was a real tension between being Muslim and being French, which caused them to emphasise one and neglect or negate the other. Jean cited Michel Foucault, arguing that to understand one’s own culture, one had to leave it, go elsewhere and look at it from a distance. I asked him if moving to France had enabled him to understand Moroccan culture better. His answer was quite complex, and linked the question of his national identity, or the tension between his national identities, with the issue of *assimilation*. He had arrived in France at too early an age to be asking ‘metaphysical’ questions, but his upbringing in the very cosmopolitan city of Casablanca helped him to understand French culture, and that in turn helped him to understand his own culture of origin. He pointed out that being French meant being from somewhere, for example Paris, Brittany or Alsace, and that he was also from somewhere. In this sense, the principles of *assimilation* and *droit à la différence* were not incompatible.

In contrast, Ahmed, who had married a French Catholic woman, described a situation of tension between identification with a Muslim country of origin and

identification with the Western country of residence. A French couple refused to be married by a woman of North African origin, even though she was actually a French citizen, elected to a municipal council, and the daughter of a *Harki* who had fought on the French side in the Algerian war of independence. Questions of identification with the nation state do not limit themselves to questions of one's own self identity, but they necessitate a consideration of the extent to which one is accepted by other members of the same national group. In formal terms, these are the issues which are considered in the politics of integration and multiculturalism, so this discussion can be continued into the next section.

7.4. The politics of integration and multiculturalism

It could be argued that the United Kingdom and France constitute opposing models of the nation. The United Kingdom model is of a nation state which incorporates different nations—England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland—with different histories, cultures, languages. So, when we refer to the nation, it is unclear whether this means the whole of the United Kingdom or one of its constituent parts. In France however, it is taken as read that there is a high degree of congruence between the French nation, the French state, the French language, French citizenship, and so on. So, in the United Kingdom there has been a *de facto* multiculturalism for centuries, while the process of nation building in France, since the revolution of 1789, has necessitated an assimilationist policy.

Let us consider how the United Kingdom model of the nation state affects Muslims (in Scotland, since that is where I did much of my research, and because that is where the consciousness of the multinational complexity of the United Kingdom is particularly

developed. There are important differences between Scotland and England as regards interaction between the model of the nation and the situation of Muslims. Firstly, people in Scotland are faced with a tension between a British and a Scottish identity, and this affects Muslims as well. In part, this often means that their national identities are particularly complex (for example, Muslim, Pakistani, British and Scottish), and in part it means that they live in a society where a complex national identity is the norm. Secondly, Scotland and England have different histories of migration and racism. Since 1945, the patterns of migration to Scotland have meant that the 'ethnic minorities' are mostly of South Asian origin (about 90 per cent), while migration to England has created much more 'ethnic' diversity (see, for example, Bowes, McCluskey and Sim 1990c). Thirdly, the United Kingdom model of the nation state brings about different relationships between national identities and migration. As Robert Miles (1993: 77-8) points out, 'Asian migrants to Scotland have not been the object of a systematic and hostile political agitation as happened in England (although this is not to deny that racist images of these migrants are commonly expressed in everyday life in Scotland)'. To explain this, he argues:

... political nationalism in Scotland during the twentieth century has tended to focus on the perceived economic and political disadvantages of the Union. Nationalism in Scotland during the 1960s and 1970s therefore identified an external cause of economic disadvantage/decline, without reference to 'race', while in England the idea of 'race' was employed to identify an internal cause of crisis, the presence of a 'coloured' population which was not 'truly' British.

However, there are also things which Scotland and England have in common as a result of the *de facto* multiculturalism which I have identified as existing *between* the constituent parts of the United Kingdom. This reflects a common principle of multiculturalism throughout the United Kingdom, and, as many of my respondents in France pointed out, the flip side of this can be a degree of ghettoisation. In Glasgow, people of South Asian origin are concentrated in the Woodlands and Govanhill/Pollokshields areas, which is where most of Glasgow's mosques are found (see the map in Figure 6.5, in the previous chapter). So the diversity which the United Kingdom and multiculturalism represent in theory may have a homogenising or ghettoising impact in practice.

The contrast between the French system of integration and the 'Anglo-Saxon' model of multiculturalism is common in French academic and journalistic discourse, but I think it is overstated. Hassan was concerned about the ghettoisation implicit in the multicultural model, and this concern was shared by other interviewees in France. When I pointed out to him that the development of an 'ethnic minority' middle class may be reducing this ghettoisation, and suggested that neither the United Kingdom nor the French model would work in the other country, he agreed that the *volonté*, the will of people, was a more important factor than the actual model. There are two other reasons for my assertion that the contrast between the Anglo-Saxon model of multiculturalism and the French model of *assimilation* is highly overstated, and hence being increasingly challenged (see, for example, Crowley 1992; Wieviorka, ed., 1997). Firstly, multiculturalism denotes the principle, or philosophy, of integration in the United Kingdom, but not the practice. Secondly, *assimilation* has nothing like the importance which it once had in France—as a concept, it is somewhat *passé*, though still supported by some politicians, academics, activists and ordinary people. In reality, the United

Kingdom and France share a common practice on the politics of integration expecting so-called 'immigrants' or 'ethnic minorities' to integrate, while at the same time making it impossible.

Nevertheless, this contrast has been made, and the principle of *assimilation* in France has been challenged in recent years, by the activities of migrant and anti-racist organisations, Muslim movements and campaigns such as the struggle to wear the *hijab* in state schools, and also by the extreme right. Some have been particularly attracted by the multicultural model. For example, Amar Lasfar argued that everybody belongs to a community—and that this is something natural—whether it be a family, a community of interests (such as culture or sport), or a religious or national community. He felt that criticisms of the United Kingdom model were misplaced, and that Muslims in the United Kingdom were more relaxed, more 'free', and less likely to be considered a danger. Even if there was an element of ghettoisation, it did not necessarily imply that the different communities were mutually antagonistic.

Amo Ferhati, the director of *Espace Intégration*, argued that multiculturalism was a system of integration by despair ('*une façon de s'intégrer par désespoir*'), because it was the only one left in France. Abdallah seemed to suggest that it was not the model of assimilation which was the problem, but rather its application to the Muslim communities in France. It had not posed a particular problem to people who migrated from Poland, Spain or Portugal, because they were of the same religious origin (*souche*) as the French. But the Muslims had a different system, a different religion, and a different identity, which they refused to give up. Among Muslims, support for the principles of integration and *laïcité* alongside criticism of their interpretation and application has been expressed with the phrase '*pour l'intégration, contre l'assimilation*' (a phrase which was used by Fatima and Abdallah). Amar Lasfar expounded this principle as follows:

Or, aujourd'hui, malheureusement, surtout ici en France ce qu'on est en train de demander aux musulmans, et surtout aux musulmans parce que c'est eux qui sont concernés aujourd'hui par l'intégration, on leur demande de se fondre dans un moule français. Le mot moule français, qu'est-ce que ça veut dire? C'est-a-dire le devoir à la ressemblance, que vous devez me ressembler. Or c'est comme dire qu'il y a une seule France, c'est comme dire qu'il y a un seul visage à la France. Nous disons qu'on ne peut pas fondre les gens, on ne peut pas fondre les valeurs culturelles, les valeurs spirituelles, les valeurs historiques, on ne peut pas passer comme s'il y a une planche sur des valeurs qui ont des années et des années ... d'existence.¹²¹

For Amar Lasfar and Saïd, different values, including Muslim ones, could only enrich French society, so attempts to assimilate them, causing them to lose their specificity, was not only damaging to Muslims, it was damaging to France as well. Of course, the support for *intégration* combined with an opposition to *assimilation* was explicit in France, and expressed in these terms, but similar sentiments were expressed in the United Kingdom. For example, the Islamic Society of Britain has argued that Muslims need to shed the image of Islam as 'the immigrant religion', but they still have a distinctive and explicit agenda for propagating Islam and challenging social injustice and exploitation. According to the United Kingdom Muslim magazine *Q-News*: 'Educational attainment and integration has failed to improve the employment prospects of second and

¹²¹ 'Now today, unfortunately, especially here in France, what is being asked of the Muslims, especially of Muslims because it's them who are at the centre of concern about integration, they are being asked to melt into a French mould. The word French mould, what does that mean? It means the duty of resemblance, that you must be like me. Well it's like saying that there's one sole France, it's like saying that France only has one face. We say that people cannot be melted, cultural values, spiritual values, historical values cannot be melted, you can't pass over values, like on a plank, when they have existed for years and years.'

third generation British Muslims'; implying that Muslims have made integration a priority, but, in the words of the headline: 'Britain shuns Muslim integration'.¹²²

There are two issues which are of significance here: the fact of discrimination, and the priority which is given to integration by Muslim actors themselves. Like *Q-News*, Abdulrahman thought that the main problems in the United Kingdom related to employment and qualifications. People from the 'ethnic minorities', even graduates, found it difficult to get employment due to discrimination—many ended up having 'a job like a bus conductor' or being self-employed—and progress up the career ladder was hampered due to a lack of training and encouragement, as well as discrimination. Daoud compared the situations of Muslims from the Indian subcontinent who had come to the United Kingdom with those who had gone to the USA. He said that Muslims who had come to the United Kingdom came initially as labourers, intending to collect money and return home 'to build a factory or something', constantly saying 'I'll go home next year', but their life in the United Kingdom eventually became permanent, whereas Muslims who went to the USA went, for example, as scholars, doctors or students, leading to massive differences.

On the other hand, Abdulrahman thought that barriers of language, culture and religion were often used as an excuse. Further, discrimination had other consequences, and he said that the situation regarding immigration restrictions was 'really bad', specifically insofar as it prevented people's relatives from coming to visit. He said that there was a fear of 'swamping', leading to unemployment. This was only propounded by a hard core who were 'extremely racist', but it was also exploited by the Conservative party. The result was that 'ethnic minorities' were themselves blamed for the problems which faced them. He said that there was a need for partnership between religious

¹²² *Q-News*, 274, August 1997, p.6.

bodies, ethnic minority organisations and employers to overcome this. The Ethnic Minorities Enterprise Centre, where he worked, encouraged employers to look at positive action and consider 'ethnic minorities' as a potential workforce. He insisted that they were looking for equal representation, not preferential treatment (he cited the Race Relations Act which allows positive action but not positive discrimination). This shows that the work of 'ethnic minority' organisations, or associations which work for 'integration', is highly significant in the United Kingdom, as it is in France and other countries.¹²³ As I mentioned in Chapter 6, Naima's counselling work, in a centre for 'black' and 'ethnic minority' women in Edinburgh, gave her an insight into the religious experiences of her clients, particularly the 'freezing' of religion and culture among Muslims and 'ethnic minorities' in the United Kingdom. Her organisation was able to address some of these issues on a personal level, as private troubles rather than public issues.

Amo Ferhati's association, *Espace Intégration*, was concerned with the integration of immigrants into French society, something which he contrasted with the anti-racist organisations like *SOS-Racisme*, who, he said, were too content with the immigrant identity:

Nous sommes pas là pour aider les immigrés à rester immigrés. Nous sommes là pour aider les immigrés à devenir français, et nous sommes là pour faire en sorte qu'ils aient, que nous ayons notre place, tous notre place dans tous les espaces publics français.¹²⁴

¹²³ A vivid demonstration of the Europe-wide relevance of this point can be found in the *European directory of migrant and ethnic minority organisations* (Ó Maoláin 1996), which lists more than 10,000 such organisations.

¹²⁴ 'We are not there to help immigrants remain immigrants. We are there to help immigrants become French, and we are there in order to act so that they have, so that we have our place, that we all have our place in every French public space.'

For him, this was a Republican principle, but he was a long way from considering the France into which he was anxious to integrate Muslim and immigrant communities to be perfect:

Dans cette association qui est pour l'intégration à cent pour cent bien sûr, nous essayons de trouver des réponses concrètes au racisme, des réponses concrètes au respect des droits de l'homme, parce qu'en France on parle de la patrie des droits de l'homme. Dans la réalité c'est faux, c'est le contraire. Les droits de l'homme c'est l'égalité des droits, l'égalité pour tous. Cette communauté n'est pas en situation égalitaire avec le reste de la population française. La France, c'est des branleurs intellectuels. Ça veut dire quoi? Ils pensent être les meilleurs, ils pensent être le peuple élu du monde, et dans l'effet c'est le tout contraire. Ils se gargarisent la gorge avec de la théorie; dans l'effet c'est le tout contraire. Alors nous, ce que nous faisons, on répond aux problèmes principaux de nos concitoyens qui sont les immigrés.¹²⁵

Though the principle of support for integration, but opposition to assimilation, was the most common among those who I interviewed, there was a minority support in France for *assimilation*, expressed most strongly by Jean. Within the context of the French debate, he contrasted the principle of *assimilation* with *droit à la différence*:

¹²⁵ 'In this association which is of course one hundred per cent for integration, we try to find concrete responses to racism, concrete responses to respect for human rights, because in France we speak of the country of human rights [or the rights of man, as in the declaration of 26 August 1789]. In reality, that's false, on the contrary. Human rights means equal rights, equality for everyone. This community is not in a situation of equality with the rest of the French population. France is a country of intellectual wankers. What does that mean? They think that they are the best, they think that they are the chosen people of the world, and in practice it's the exact opposite. They gargle with theory in their throats; in practice it's the exact opposite. So we, what we do, is to respond to the most important problems of our fellow citizens who are immigrants.'

... c'est très controversé, mais je trouve qu'il y a beaucoup plus de générosité dans l'assimilation que dans l'intégration.... L'intégration, à la rigueur, on continue à cultiver cette question d'origine, à la rigueur. C'est vrai, parce que pour l'instant c'est une vision d'intégration, ce système, mais ça marchera pas.... Il y a un risque de vivre d'une façon marginale. Par contre, l'assimilation peut être, si je le comprends, comme le droit d'être comme moi, le droit de partager mes valeurs. Moi, j'ai peur que le droit à la différence se traduit quelquefois par l'exclusion....

Oui, mais le droit d'être comme moi, de partager mes valeurs, ça peut être aussi une obligation, pas seulement un droit...; c'est pas ça, l'assimilation?

Pour moi, non. L'assimilation, pour moi, c'est un droit, c'est pas une obligation.¹²⁶

There were different ideas regarding how integration could be achieved, and this is to some extent reflected in the debate as to whether integration is a *fait accompli* or something which must be worked towards. Those who had ideas on this question tended to agree that integration had not yet been achieved, though there was some optimism, particularly as Muslims who were being born in the United Kingdom or France were frequently British or French citizens by birth (thus, the issue of taking citizenship somehow 'betraying' Islam was becoming irrelevant). Some, like Amo Ferhati, insisted

¹²⁶ '... it's very controversial, but I find that there is much more generosity in assimilation than in integration.... Integration, at the extreme, that question of origin continues to be cultivated, at the extreme. It's true, because at the moment this system is a vision of integration, but it won't work... There is a risk of living on the margins. On the other hand, assimilation can be, if I've understood, like the right to be like me, the right to share my values. Personally, I'm worried that the right to be different can sometimes be translated as exclusion....

'Yes, but the right to be like me, to share my values, that can also be an obligation, not just a right...; is that not what integration is?

'Not for me. Assimilation, for me, is a right, it's not an obligation.'

on the need to tackle racism and unemployment as a precondition for effective integration, while others, like Ahmed (who moved from Morocco to France partly because of the greater freedom of expression which he believed existed in France), emphasised that integration could only be achieved through culture, *inter alia* schools, libraries, cultural associations, art, music, architecture, but not religious or political organisations. For Amro Ferhati, Europe was an opportunity to experiment with different forms of integration, notably the 'Anglo-Saxon' model of multiculturalism, since the French model had failed. He argued that integration could only succeed if an *élite franco-musulmane* was created, which could raise the social and economic status of the Muslim population of France, and provide effective role models. This did not mean that Muslims had to achieve spectacular success, but that doctors, engineers, executives and managers could demonstrate that they had 'succeeded', and that this was something normal. At the same time, he argued that it was the Muslims who had to integrate into French society, not *vice-versa*. He saw the *affaire du foulard* as showing a desire for integration, but that Muslims wanted France to do the integrating, rather than doing so themselves. He thought that there were similar occurrences in the United Kingdom, due to the principle of multiculturalism.

7.5. Conclusion

It is important to emphasise, particularly in the light of the above discussion of ideas about how integration can best be made to work, that this integration problematic is to be rejected, even if it is an important issue for some actors. It is racism and the rejection of difference which is the problem, not integration, and the right to integrate is denied to a whole range of people who are labelled as deviant in some respect, not just those who

are labelled as ‘foreigners’. Analytically speaking, all migrants to the West are already integrated as soon as they arrive. Many came in response to a request for migrant labour, so their very arrival was an act of economic integration. As Hans Enzensberger (1994: 135) writes:

New arrivals traditionally showed themselves extremely willing to adapt, even if it is doubtful that the famous ‘melting pot’ ever existed. Most were well able to distinguish between integration and assimilation. They accepted the written and unwritten norms of the society which took them in, but they tended to hold on to their cultural tradition—and often also to their language and religious customs.

Surely cultural diversity can only enrich a society, not destroy it. If integration has broken down, and been replaced with conflict, it is because of explicit and institutional racism, not an unwillingness to integrate. And if a preoccupation with identity, or national identity, is a symptom of this conflict, the causes are the same.

Although the United Kingdom has proceeded on the basis of a theory of multiculturalism, underpinned by a discourse of race relations and the *de facto* multicultural model of the nation state, and although France has proceeded on the basis of a theory of *assimilation*, underpinned by a discourse of *intégration* and the uniform model of the nation state, this chapter has argued that the practice of integration or multiculturalism has been broadly similar, and that there is diversity within each country. This divergence between appearance and reality constitutes the essential context for the data which is presented in this chapter. So, we must recognise that national identities are complex, and that Muslim identities are no less so. As a result, we would not expect the

interaction between national identities and Muslim identities to be anything other than complex.

However, this should not be taken as a counsel of despair. The work of Pierre Bourdieu (for example 1984, 1991) and C. Wright Mills (1959) should alert us to the contention that the job of the sociologist is to recognise chaos and divergence where there is apparent harmony, and to recognise order where there is an appearance of freedom and diversity. In the same way, this thesis has generally emphasised the diversity of Muslim identities, and of representations of Islam, in a context where each side, so to speak, views the other as monolithic. In this chapter, however, we have taken what appears to be diverse—the contrasting models of the nation state and of integration in the United Kingdom and France—and shown that this hides a degree of homogeneity.

This may seem like a strange conclusion, and somewhat out of step with the rest of this thesis. However, we should consider that there is a Western model of the nation state, and by this I mean, like Benedict Anderson (1991: 5-7), that the nation state is an imagined territorial community with fixed borders, which exclude all who are perceived to belong outside those borders. This model applies equally to the United Kingdom and France, but it is necessary to create differences between nation states in order to justify this imagining. By creating different models of the nation state, the Western model achieves legitimacy within the West. By exporting the model outside the West, as has been done, it achieves hegemony. Thus, Muslims are excluded from being fully perceived as members of the nation state, and this exclusion is achieved not on the basis of a crusader ideology, or an Orientalist imagining, but on the basis of modernity. It is this exclusion, and the responses and resistance which it has provoked, which has been the subject of this thesis.

8. The school and the *hijab*

8.1. Introduction

The educational sphere is a site of frequent media debate regarding the place of Islam, and also an important site of socialisation in which the younger generation of Muslims can experience a tension or reconciliation of Muslim and Western cultures. As such, it is clearly an example of an arena where Islam and the West actually meet each other (following on from the end of Chapter 6), and, as such, it is of major relevance to the emergence of a dialectic of neo-Orientalist representations of Islam and the expression of Muslim identities. It is an arena where perceptions of the West, to a greater or lesser degree, exclude Islam, as the educational institutions of the West are often seen as having a duty to transmit Western values, and this can have an alienating effect on Muslims within the educational sphere, which may also be felt by other Muslims.

The purpose of this chapter is to compare the relevant issues of contention in the educational spheres of the United Kingdom and France, and assess their relevance to Muslim identities. It begins by addressing the debates about state-funded Muslim schools in the United Kingdom, a country where the law expects state education to be 'broadly Christian', and this is situated within a more diverse debate which also includes questions about religious education, physical education, sex education, and the provision of *halal* food for pupils. Then, it addresses the French debate about the wearing of the

hijab in state schools, the so-called *affaire du foulard*, which has dominated discussion about the place of Islam in French schools. Following this, I look at the meanings of the *hijab* in Orientalist discourse, in the Qur'an, among opponents and supporters of the right of Muslim women and schoolgirls to wear the *hijab*, and for the women and schoolgirls themselves. The purpose of this is to problematise the debate, showing that it has been premised on the *hijab* having a single meaning, whereas in reality it has diverse meanings. It is therefore of major importance to addressing the central hypotheses of this work, that Muslim identities are diverse, but perceived to be homogeneous, and that there is a connection between these phenomena. In the conclusion, I look at the consequences of this analysis for the thesis as a whole, commenting on the complexity and wider significance of the debate, and the particular significance of the comparison between the United Kingdom and France.

8.2. The educational sphere: a comparison

In the United Kingdom, an important bone of contention has been the issue of grant-maintained status for Muslim schools. It was pointed out that state funding was available for Roman Catholic, Church of England and Jewish schools, but not Muslim schools, until the government approved such status for two Muslim schools on 9 January 1998. In *The Guardian*, there were a number of letters and articles which illustrate the complexity of this issue, and some similarities between Britain and France. Roy Hattersley, a self-confessed atheist, praised the decision, arguing that it marked 'a long awaited advance in the creation of a multiracial society', that 'the idea of being British and Muslim will seem far less fanciful than it did before the announcement was made', and that it would 'undermine the undesirable extreme Islamic minority' and 'the fear of

what is called Islamic fundamentalism', since Muslims were being 'welcomed into the mainstream of British society'.¹²⁷

On the other hand, Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, a Muslim, wrote that, although her initial reaction was one of joy, she would not send her own children to a Muslim school:

Not because I don't trust them to provide my daughter with an adequate education (though there are schools which do deliberately clip the aspirations of girls); not because the schools will provide recruits for a British intifada, or because I am ashamed of my religion. I am immensely proud to be a Muslim and love deeply my many Islamic cultural legacies. But separation is dangerous, as is the belief that victims automatically accrue virtue and perfection.... Separated out, our children might acquire an overdeveloped sense of their own special status and a sense of grievance.... The unanswerable question is whether they will get more or less militant surrounded only by other Muslims with no experience, until it is too late, of friendship and mutual respect between different faiths.¹²⁸

So, and this point must be emphasised, the issue cannot be seen as a straightforward fight between Muslims and non-Muslims, although some people on both sides would like to see it that way. At least one atheist was positive about Muslim schools, and at least one Muslim was negative. As in France, there is also a secularist opposition to the presence of Islam in the education system. A letter from the General Secretary of the National Secular Society read as follows:

¹²⁷ *The Guardian*, 12.1.98, p.14.

¹²⁸ *The Guardian*, 13.1.98, p.15.

It takes a huge leap of logic for Roy Hattersley to reach the conclusion that state-funding of Muslim schools will undermine Islamic extremists. Surely, separating Muslim, Jewish and Christian children from their peers (including Hindus and Sikhs) can cause nothing but division and misunderstanding in society, as Northern Ireland will testify. Surely, a better way forward is to withdraw funding from all religious schools, say over 10 years. Stop the separatism and allow children to mix freely with each other in their formative years. Only in this way can there be any hope of easing hostilities between races and religions.¹²⁹

The writer clearly did not intend to pick on Muslims, but rather to criticise the public role of all religious bodies. But does a negative portrayal of religion in general do anything to improve, or worsen, representations of Islam and of Muslims, or even the degree of Islamophobia? This is a particularly pertinent question when we consider that Islam is relatively powerless, particularly compared to Christianity in the United Kingdom, and that the Established Church of England has a significant role in the educational sphere (cf. Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia 1997b: 24). Nevertheless, this is an open question, and I would not like to commit myself either way.

The issue, which was raised by Jørgen Nielsen (1995b: 158), of whether children should be educated into a national culture, or whether parents should determine the nature of their children's education, is also relevant to the place of Muslim pupils in British state schools. When a Muslim schoolteacher protested about Muslim pupils singing Christmas carols, the editorial in *The Independent* read:

¹²⁹ *The Guardian*, 14.1.98, p.16.

... for all that there may be genuine Muslim gripes against the hold of Christianity over state education, the Birmingham maths teacher went too far. There is nothing wrong with a good Christmas sing-song, and most families, whatever their religion, should be glad for their children to participate.... All parents are at liberty to withdraw their children.... Teachers are mostly acutely sensitive to the different belief systems and cultural backgrounds of the pupils in their care.... Learning about other religions and cultures, whether we choose to believe in them or not, is an essential part of a rounded education.... The rituals through which others worship and celebrate their faith are as much a part of religion as the names of the Gods they believe in. Teaching religion and culture through songs, stories and drama is probably the best way to communicate it to non-believers, particularly young ones.... Mr Khan, the maths teacher, should have sat through the carol concert and enjoyed the singing, rather than perceiving the Christian songs as a threat to his own religion....¹³⁰

This commentary is in marked contrast to some interpretations of *laïcité* in France, as is outlined below. As well as religious education, important issues which emerge in the state sector include sex education, physical education and the provision of *halal* meat:

... once immigrants from the Indian sub-continent started to bring in wives and to raise families, Islam moved into the public sphere. Schools became one of the first areas of conflict: Muslim parents demanded *halal* meat at first and,

¹³⁰ *The Independent*, 20.12.96, p.17.

later, special clothing for girls in PE classes and modifications of the sex education syllabus; some had objections to the teaching of evolution. Many were not happy with mixed-sex schools. Even the demand for *halal* meat was controversial at first, partly because it was not understood. 'At one time the education committee said to us: "We already serve curry. Why do you want more?"' says Dr Bashir Ahmed, a Manchester GP and the chairman of the city's council for mosques. 'But of course what matters is how it's prepared. You can have Yorkshire pudding and roast beef so long as the ingredients are *halal*.'¹³¹

There was a reaction against this, which shows that misunderstanding, once challenged, could lead to hostility:

The resulting conflicts coalesced around the figure of a headmaster: Ray Honeyford, at the Drummond middle school in the heart of the Muslim Manningham area. Honeyford ... objected to the withdrawal of children from school for long holidays at home, to the end of the bussing policy that had distributed Muslim children around the city's schools, and to the provision of *halal* meat. 'How do we reconcile that sort of indifference to animal care with one of the school's values, love of dumb creatures and respect for their welfare?' he asked, a question that would have had a better ring had it not been echoed by the local National Front, which had its own agenda. Honeyford saw the school's job as the transmission of English culture, which would assume priority over the values with which the children arrived. A committee of local

¹³¹ *The Independent*, 5.12.95, pp.1, 2, 5.

parents was formed to try and have him sacked. There were boycotts and demonstrations outside the school. The council dithered, and finally decided to be rid of him, saying that he had lost the confidence of parents. In 1986, he took early retirement.¹³²

French newspaper reports on the subject of Muslims and the educational sphere were dominated by the continuing *affaire du foulard* in the Lille area and elsewhere in France. The *affaire du foulard* first came to prominence in the Autumn of 1989, shortly after France had celebrated the bicentenary of the Revolution, when three Muslim schoolgirls in the town of Creil, not far from Paris, were expelled for wearing the *hijab*, and refusing to remove it. In so doing, they were judged to have infringed secular Republican principles, or, more accurately, the principle of *laïcité* (the understanding and application of which has been central to this affair, and which is analysed in more detail in Chapter 9). This principle had been developed from the ideas of the Revolution, and was held to be an important guarantor of religious and civil liberties, and even of democracy itself. The debate had the appearance of dividing France in two: one part of France saw the *hijab* as an attack, either on French values or the universal value of *laïcité*; the other part saw its ban as a negation of those same principles, which implied tolerance, religious liberty, and the welcome of other people's cultures and ideas. It was compared to the Dreyfus affair (see Gaspard and Khosrokhavar 1995: 11), which had polarised France with an even greater intensity, and had highlighted the centrality of religious intolerance in France, but, ironically, the Dreyfus affair was an important factor in the institutionalisation of *laïcité*, which was being used against those and other Muslim schoolgirls.

¹³² *The Independent*, 5.12.95, pp.1, 2, 5.

One person who I spoke to while doing ethnographic research in France told me, memorably, that: '*... le foulard, c'est pas un vêtement*'.¹³³ On one level, of course, the *hijab* is an item of clothing, but there are several other levels which are related to important questions of modernity and citizenship, *inter alia* questions of religion and secularisation, the essence of the nation state, and the autonomy of the family. Of course, an item of dress can possess an important social significance. But why the *hijab*? A headscarf can be mainly functional, a means of protecting its wearer from the elements, or it can be a fashion item. In neither case does it serve as a tool in any struggle between religion and secularisation, nor does it even possess any religious significance. Other items of religious dress possess some social significance, but they are not usually connected with ultimate questions of modernity and citizenship. There are rarely problems with school pupils in France wearing a crucifix or a yarmulke, for example, and even when there are, these tend to be perceived and addressed as private troubles rather than public issues. In order to understand why the *hijab* is so different, we must consider it in the context of Orientalism, and of meanings of the *hijab* in Islam. Then we will be able to understand the French debate.

Nielsen's point about children being educated into a national culture, or parents determining the nature of their children's education, was made with reference to a comparison between the *affaire du foulard* and the Rushdie affair. However, it makes the more general point that the education of children is an important field affecting relations between Muslims in the West and the wider society. This question is in the background of all the cases to which I have referred in this section, both in France and in the United Kingdom. Otherwise, there would be no debate on state-funded Muslim schools (although excuses were often given to delay this request, such as the number of

¹³³ '*... the headscarf is not an item of clothing*'.

other schools in the immediate area), on physical education, religious education, sex education or the provision of *halal* food.

There are areas of contrast as well. It is interesting that there is no one overriding issue of concern in the United Kingdom—the issues which are cited above are all important—while the issue of the *hijab* does dominate this discussion in France (though it is not of course the only issue). Furthermore, as is stated above, the French emphasis on *laïcité* is in marked contrast to the commentary in *The Independent* about Mr Khan. The admission of ‘genuine Muslim gripes against the hold of Christianity over state education’ is played down, with an assertion that Mr Khan ‘went too far’, that participation in ‘a good Christmas sing-song’ is appropriate to all pupils, and that a degree of participation in religious rituals is an essential part of a multicultural education. In France, any Christian predominance in state education would be considered intolerable—indeed, it was a century ago.

8.3. Meanings of the *hijab*

While, as has been stated, the *hijab* is of particular importance to discussions about the place of Muslims in French society, it is of general significance to the West as a whole, including the United Kingdom. Indeed, there was an exhibition in one of Glasgow’s museums, from August 1997 to January 1998, entitled ‘The Veil in Islam’, and this featured a video project entitled ‘The Veil in Glasgow’. This showed that there were different perceptions of the *hijab* worldwide, including in Glasgow. The broader significance lies in the *hijab* being perceived as an Orientalist symbol, which is of particular, though not exclusive, relevance to France. As I argued in Chapter 2, it used to be premised on a stereotype of the Orient as exotic and sensual, exemplified by the

European imagination of the Arabian nights, snake charmers, harems and so on. This was particularly the case in French Orientalism, which saw an almost Freudian domination of sexual symbols over Oriental society, in which the Oriental woman was seen as the sensual object *par excellence*. For Gérard de Nerval, the preponderance of veils and headcoverings in Cairo concealed ‘a deep, rich fund of feminine sexuality’, which brought out complex responses and frightening self-discoveries in the Orientalists (Said 1995: 182, 188).

So there was already something frightening about the ‘veil’ in the nineteenth century, and that has still not disappeared. However, the sensual stereotype of the Orient and of Muslim society is scarcely recognisable in contemporary discourse. In the late twentieth century, the Orient and the West are closer together, so to speak, so this exoticism is no longer convincing. It has been largely replaced with a discourse about the alleged fanaticism of so-called Muslim ‘extremists’ and ‘fundamentalists’. Thus, the Western stereotype of the Muslim woman shifts from the sensual object to the victim of misogyny. In my research, Muslim interviewees often cited the role of women in this connection, that is, as an example of Western stereotypes of Islam, and only rarely as an illustration of what was perceived to be Western decadence. Ismael, the tea room proprietor in Fives, did believe that women were beginning to dominate men – politically, culturally and demographically—and that this was a sign of the end of the world. He argued that men were always tempted in the presence of women due to the work of the *shaitan* (devil) and the seductive power of women themselves. The divine norm, on the other hand, was that men should protect their *own* women.

Others argued that Muslims had given an impression of misogyny, even though it was contrary to Islam. Fatima, like others in France, saw this in terms of the *hijab*, and pointed out that it varied from culture to culture. For example, she argued that women

would not usually wear the *hijab* in Senegal, but would in the Maghreb. In France, many women were wearing the *hijab* by choice, not as an act of submission, but as an attempt to escape from Western materialism through a '*retour aux sources*'. Another interviewee, Saïd, who had only been in France for a few years when I interviewed him, was particularly critical:

Les musulmans donnent une très mauvaise image de l'Islam. Donc, le français, quand il voit ... le musulman, il voit sur le miroir, quoi, donc pas l'image de l'Islam. Quand il voit sur un miroir il voit cette image diffamée, bien sûr, donc l'Islam est triste, cet Islam corrompt, cet Islam qui tue des gens..., cet Islam qui laisse la femme dans un petit coin. Non, c'est pas ça.¹³⁴

It is worth emphasising that this is particularly relevant to France, but has a more general significance to the West as a whole, including the United Kingdom. Another reason for this comes from the distinction, which has already been drawn in this thesis, between assimilation, withdrawal and a combined Muslim-Western identity as different responses to Orientalist representations. Significantly, when the decision is taken to assimilate, and the perception that Western culture and values are superior to their 'Muslim' or 'Oriental' equivalents is reinforced, Muslim women who refuse to wear the *hijab* are valued according to a perception of what they have in common with the West. By extension, when women do choose to wear the *hijab*, either as a token of withdrawal or of a combined Muslim-Western identity, this is perceived as a rejection of the West, or even an attack on its values and essence.

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¹³⁴ 'Muslims give a very bad image of Islam. So, when a French person sees ... a Muslim, he sees in a mirror, so he doesn't see the image of Islam. When he sees in a mirror, of course, he sees this defiled image, so Islam is sad, this Islam corrupts, this Islam which kills people..., this Islam which leaves the woman in a little corner. No, that's not it.'

The *Tablighi Jama'at* is a good example here. It is a particularly powerful *maslak* in Belgium (Dassetto 1988: 165), and is also significant in France under the name of *Foi et Pratique* (Kepel 1991: 179-209; Nielsen 1995b: 19, 135-6). However, it emerged as part of the Muslim response to British rule in India (Joly 1995: 9; Rizvi 1994: 338), and is linked to the Deobandi mosques in the United Kingdom.¹³⁵ As a movement, it has some characteristics which come close to the withdrawal ideal type, in that it 'addresses itself entirely to Muslims, and makes no attempt to preach to the unconverted', and some members 'who live within the movement rather than in society tend to wear specific dress' (King 1994: 14, 18). The principles as set down by the founder, Muhammad Ilyas, in 1934, seem to fit this ideal type quite well, and the integration of dress, including the *hijab*, and the role of women with more obviously *religious* (as the term is widely understood) beliefs and practices is noticeable:

Article of faith;

prayer;

acquisition and dissemination of knowledge;

adoption of Islamic appearance *and dress*;

adoption of Islamic ceremonies and rejection of non-Islamic ones;

seclusion of women;

performance of *nikah* or marriage ceremony in the Islamic manner;

adherence to Muslim dress by women;

non-deviation from Islamic beliefs and non-acceptance of any other religion;

protection and preservation of mutual rights;

participation of responsible persons in every meeting and convention;

¹³⁵ According to Danielle Joly (1995: 69), the Deobandis control about 16 per cent of the mosques in Birmingham. This implies that they, and, by extension, the *Tablighi Jama'at*, have an important presence on a United Kingdom-wide scale.

pledge not to impart secular instruction to children before they have had religious learning;

pledge to strive and endeavour for the preaching of religion;

observance of cleanliness;

pledge to protect the dignity and respect of one another (Haq 1972: 110-11).

In spite of the principles of the *Tablighi Jama'at*, there are differences of opinion among Muslims on the obligation, or otherwise, of Muslim women to wear the *hijab*. The following verses from the Qur'an may, on the face of it, seem clear:

And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof; that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands their fathers their husbands' fathers their sons their husbands' sons their brothers or their brothers' sons or their sisters' sons or their women or the slaves whom their right hands possess or male servants free of physical needs or small children who have no sense of the shame of sex (*Al Nur*, 24: 31).

O Prophet! Tell thy wives and daughters, and the believing women, that they should cast their outer garments over their persons (when abroad): that is most convenient, that they should be known (as such) and not molested (*Al Ahzab*, 33: 59).

Yet these verses are interpreted in different ways. Muslims in France, and indeed world-wide, have different views regarding the *hijab*. It is undoubtedly true that some have taken a literalist interpretation of these texts, and it may be true, as Camille Lacoste-Dujardin (1995), an important French writer on ceremonies, festivals and gender roles in Arab-Muslim societies, and others have argued, that this interpretation is the one most favoured by Islamist ideologues. On the other hand, the instruction in these verses is not given to women themselves. The first verse is an instruction to say this to the women, and the second one is explicitly directed to the Prophet. Even at the level of lower criticism, there are problems with the interpretation. Furthermore, there are other interpretations of the texts which situate them in the context of broader principles, such as the importance of education. Following this interpretation, which has been propounded by some Sufi thinkers, parents would not be justified in allowing their children to be deprived of education in order to make a point about the *hijab*.¹³⁶ Another interpretation, similar in effect, is that of Soheib Ben Cheikh, the Grand Mufti of Marseilles (cited in Aziz 1996: 233):

Maintenant, on doit s'interroger: pourquoi Dieu a-t-il voulu voiler la femme?
Quand on mène une exégèse textuelle, je crois qu'il faut éviter de ridiculiser Dieu. Quand Il a imposé à la femme le voile, c'était dans le seul objectif de préserver sa dignité et sa personnalité en fonction des moyens de l'époque.
Aujourd'hui, le moyen qui préserve la dignité et la personnalité de la femme, ce n'est plus le voile, c'est l'instruction.¹³⁷

¹³⁶ I am grateful to Dr Nabil Salem for this information.

¹³⁷ 'Today, we need to ask ourselves: why did God want to veil women? When we carry out a textual exegesis, I think it necessary to avoid ridiculing God. When He imposed the veil on women, it was with the sole purpose of preserving their dignity and personality according to the means of the time. Today, the way to preserve the dignity and personality of women is no longer the veil, but education.'

Interpretations of the Qur'an, as with any sacred text, are based on an assumption about its purpose. Where the Qur'an is seen as a rule book, revealing a number of propositions, a literalist interpretation is logical. Where it is seen in more contextual or even existential terms, God revealing *Himself*, literalist interpretations frequently become untenable.

When it comes to the debate in French society about the *hijab*, it is instructive to consider the *affaire du foulard* as an example of *laïcité* in practice, and being contested. It enables us to see why *laïcité* is important to relations between Muslims in France and the rest of French society. While the ban on the *hijab* may appear to verge on racism, and this charge has indeed been made, it has been strongly resented by opponents of the *hijab*, particularly those who see themselves as the defenders of *laïcité*. One of these people, Emmanuel Todd (1995: 32), was asked to comment on the reported opposition of 80 per cent of French people to the *hijab*, and replied:

Il exprime, paradoxalement et d'une façon malheureusement répressive, ce que la France a toujours refusé: le statut mineur de la femme et l'endogamie. Il y a là comme une exhortation, maladroite mais réelle, à la mixité. Considéré sous cet angle, le rejet du foulard est le contraire même du racisme.¹³⁸

It is true that opposition to the *hijab* has been widespread, and has sometimes been based on an understanding of the Revolutionary principle of equality. When the *affaire du foulard* returned to media prominence in the autumn of 1994, it was instructive to note that press coverage on the political left and right wings was generally hostile to the

¹³⁸ 'It shows, paradoxically and in an unfortunately repressive fashion, what France has always opposed: the lower status of women and endogamy. There's a call there, inept but real, to *mixité* [mixture, integration, co-education]. Looking at it from that angle, opposition to the headscarf is the very opposite of racism.'

hijab. Put simply, the right were opposed to what they saw as an attack on French culture and institutions, while the left saw themselves as defending the progressive principle of *laïcité* and, in some cases, equal rights for women. The Catholic press, such as *La Croix*, seemed to be the only prominent dissenters from this view, arguing that the ban on the *hijab* was a denial of religious liberty.

Indeed, some of the self-appointed defenders of *laïcité* have displayed an Islamophobia which has bordered on paranoia, though they are not unique in this respect. Guy Coq (1996: 6), an editor of the French journal *Esprit*, wrote a polemical article in *Libération* in which he referred frequently to the *hijab* as the *voile islamiste* (Islamist veil). In doing so, he confused the *hijab* with the full veil, and *islamique* (Islamic) with *islamiste*, which often has overtones of so-called 'Islamic fundamentalism'. At the stroke of a pen, schoolgirls who wore the *hijab* were aligned with religious extremism, terrorism, and the subjugation of women. Jean-François Monnet (1990: 54), in words already quoted in this thesis, expressed this amalgam more explicitly, stating that '*derrière les jeunes filles au foulard se cache la stratégie des islamistes*'.¹³⁹

On Coq's use of the term 'veil', this often implies a garment which covers the face, whereas *hijab* usually refers to a garment which covers the top and sides of the head, and the shoulders. While the Arabic word *hijab* does mean curtain, or covering, so 'veil' is a legitimate translation, the connotations are misleading. Having said that, Lacoste-Dujardin (1995) has lent some credibility to Coq's polemic by distinguishing between the Arabic terms for different kinds of veil or headscarf—such as *khimar*, *jilbab* and *hijab*—charging that the latter has been invented and prescribed quite recently by Islamist ideologues. We shall return to this point shortly.

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¹³⁹ '... behind the young girls in headscarves hides the strategy of the Islamists'.

Coq's argument was that the *hijab* was fundamentally anti-republican and inimical to the rights of women, and that the French constitutional court, in upholding the rights of schoolgirls to wear it, were upholding religious liberty at the expense of equality. His polemic ended with a call to legislate against the *hijab* in schools:

Le foulard islamiste perturbe profondément la communauté scolaire.... Que des juristes idéologues ne voient pas qu'il met en cause l'ordre républicain, alors il faut le leur montrer. Quant toutes les classes où le voile a été imposé par les fonctionnaires ignorants des problèmes éducatifs seront de fait dans l'impossibilité de fonctionner, il restera à l'Etat républicain, à choisir clairement de s'affirmer (Coq 1996: 6).¹⁴⁰

Coq's argument did not go unchallenged, and a letter in *Libération* argued that the attempt to change the law was playing games with xenophobia. However, more expulsions were reported, and the minister for education, François Bayrou, also called for a law against the *hijab*. Debates in the press seemed to turn around the question of whether or not the *hijab* should be illegal, while it was assumed that it was indeed harmful and '*antilaïque*'.¹⁴¹ One school in the Lille area attempted to define the principle that children should be educated into a national culture (to use Nielsen's distinction which is cited above), and that this formed an important part of democratic, republican principles. The school circulated a paper among its staff, as they had decided not to expel pupils for wearing the *hijab*, but to use persuasion. I was able to obtain a copy of this paper, which is quoted in full in Appendix 1 (and translated in Appendix 2). There

¹⁴⁰ 'The Islamist headscarf is disturbing the educational community deeply.... If the jurist-ideologues cannot see that it is calling the Republican order into question, they must be shown. When all the classes, where the veil has been imposed by bureaucrats ignorant of pedagogic problems, are unable to function, the Republican state will have to make a clear choice to assert itself'.

¹⁴¹ *Libération*, 12.12.96, p.13; 4.12.96, p.12; 5.12.96, p.6; *La Voix du Nord*, 28.11.96, pp.1, 4, 12.

are a number of important points which can be made with reference to this document, as they encapsulate the arguments and contradictions in the position taken by opponents of the *hijab*.

Firstly, the document seeks to provide a negation of criticisms made by those in favour of allowing the *hijab* to be worn in state schools, by insisting that opposition to the *hijab* is not a racist or Lepenist act, it does not imply exclusion (unless this is a self-exclusion on the part of the pupils concerned), it does not call any religious beliefs or practices into question, it is not a Qur'anic obligation (on the basis that it had not been seen in French state schools ten years before), the education system is not Catholic, and it does not marginalise Islam.

Secondly, the document reflects a particular conception of the Republic, the nation, and *intégration* (which has a similar place in French political discourse as 'race relations' in the United Kingdom), which are common to left-wing opponents of the *hijab*. The Republic means *laïcité*, equality, and respect for the law, which is the same for everyone. The nation means unity and openness to others, and therefore cannot permit fragmentation or the establishment, in any way, of communities which are autonomous or closed. Such communities would cause intolerance, exclusion, ghettoisation and confrontation, and it is only the nation which can prevent this. Integration means accepting these principles, believing oneself to be welcomed and equally treated, whatever the reality might seem to be.

Thirdly, it is alleged that there is a stark choice between *laïcité* on the one hand, and exclusion, racism and persecution on the other. The document states: '*La laïcité assure même une protection des convictions religieuses, elle est un rempart contre l'exclusion, le racisme ... et la persécution: en la mettant en cause on s'expose soi-même à ces*

dangers.¹⁴² It should be noted that one does not have to oppose *laïcité* in order to become exposed to these dangers. Even questioning *laïcité* has this effect, and can be identified with a rejection of freedom and equality, though the document does not say whether questioning *laïcité* means questioning the principle, the ideal, or the way in which it has been interpreted in French legal doctrine, and put into practice in French political and civil society, including the state education system.

Fourthly, the document betrays certain perceptions, or misperceptions, of Islam which are common to Orientalist discourse, and which tend to support Said's rather harsh view that the West is only capable of understanding Islam in a demeaning way (see Said 1997b: 162-73). I have already mentioned the contention that the 'veil' is not a Qur'anic obligation, on the basis that it was not worn in French state schools ten years before, even though the one-time non-appearance of the 'veil' in French schools does not affect the obligations laid down in the Qur'an, whatever diversity of interpretations exists regarding the relevant verses. In addition, the *hijab* is alleged to be a symbol of sex discrimination, inferiorisation, manipulation and imposition by men, the negation of citizenship, and a symbol of religious discrimination against schoolgirls (Muslim or non-Muslim) who do not wear it. The allegation of sex discrimination is unsurprising, given the context of the Orientalist shift to a fanatical stereotype of Islam, but it is interesting that the *hijab* is held to discriminate simultaneously against those who do wear it, and against those who do not. In addition, the interpretation of Muslim culture and civilisation is that it *had* been more tolerant and 'civilised' than the West, implying that it is now less tolerant and civilised, and that its principal role was to transmit European (Greek and Roman) civilisation to modern Europe, rather than making significant contributions of its own (though the authors try to claim respect for Islam on the

¹⁴² 'Laïcité even ensures *protection* for religious beliefs, it is a bulwark against exclusion, racism ... and persecution: in questioning it, one exposes oneself to these dangers.'

grounds that they teach the history of Muslim civilisation and recognise its contribution to mathematics and anatomy).

It is not surprising that such popular discourses (even though this is a popularisation of an important strand in French academic thought) should be problematic, but even Lacoste-Dujardin's argument lacks force, due to her insistence on identifying *the meaning* (singular) of the *hijab*. Thus, she neglects what is demonstrated clearly by Gaspard and Khosrokhavar (1995), that the *hijab* has different meanings for different people. To some it means oppression; to others it means religious devotion, or even liberty. To some it implies sexism; to others it valorises women. Even where the Arabic distinctions are followed, we find that many Muslim women, whether they wear it or not, regard the *hijab* as more liberal than, for example, the *chador*. *Chador* is an Iranian term for a black garment which is longer than the *hijab*: it completely hides the hair, face, and even hands. Among French Muslims, the term is sometimes used pejoratively (see Altschull 1995: 46-7).

It may seem that opposition to the *hijab* came from all sections of (secular) French society. However, some have taken a different position, whether for academic, political or legal reasons. The charge of racism has been lent credibility by academic analyses such as that of Bernard Defrance (1996: 78), who cited a legal maxim at the heart of *laïcité* and the Republic: '*Nul ne peut être mis en cause pour un acte dont il n'est pas responsable, dont il n'est pas l'auteur personnellement*'.¹⁴³ To punish someone for belonging to a community, or for abiding by the norms of that community, is tantamount to racism. Similarly, Michel Wieviorka's (1995: 126-7) analysis associates opposition to the *hijab* with racism and xenophobia, though he avoids the mistake of conflating these categories, that is, charging that opposition to the *hijab* is racist and xenophobic. He

¹⁴³ 'No-one can be accused of an act for which he or she is not responsible, of which he or she is not personally the author.'

also suggests that the focus on the *hijab* has served to deflect attention from shortcomings and inequalities in the education system. In other words, the whole debate has become a tool of legitimization:

The more the problem of schooling is experienced ... as one of immigration or Islam, the more one sees, on the one hand, individual behaviours which establish a *de facto* segregation and, on the other, resentment on the part of those French people 'born and bred' who do not have the means to take their children out of schools with a high proportion of immigrants. And the more one also sees media and politico-ideological explosions like the 'Islamic headscarf' affair, which betray the presence of fear and anxiety, and sometimes also more or less overt racism or xenophobia. Would it not be desirable for the interest here to be shifted more clearly towards debates on the goals of education, towards conflict and protest around what the schools produce, around teaching methods, academic under-achievement, the aims of training or the autonomy of educational establishments?

Some have argued against the banning of the *hijab* on political grounds. Danielle Mitterrand remonstrated: '*Si aujourd'hui deux cents ans après la Révolution, la laïcité ne pouvait pas accueillir toutes les religions, c'est qu'il y'aurait un recul.... Si le voile est l'expression d'une religion, nous devons accepter les traditions, quelles qu'elles soient.*'¹⁴⁴ At the time of the first *affaire du foulard* in 1989, Lionel Jospin was education minister in the national government. When he was asked in the National Assembly what the headteachers should do, he replied: '*L'école ne peut exclure car elle*

¹⁴⁴ 'If, today, two hundred years after the Revolution, *laïcité* cannot welcome all religions and forms of expression in France, then there will have been a step backwards.... If the veil expresses a religion, we must accept all traditions, whatever they are.'

est faite pour accueillir'.¹⁴⁵ However, he was strongly opposed within the National Assembly, by the teaching unions, and the silence of his own Prime Minister was interpreted negatively (Gaspard and Khosrokhavar 1995: 21-2).

Nevertheless, the legal position has been settled, in the absence of a change in the law, in favour of the right to wear the *hijab* in state schools. The *Conseil d'Etat* (uppermost French administrative court) ruled, on 10 July 1995, that the wearing of the *hijab* was not in itself an attack on *laïcité*, and therefore did not constitute a sufficient reason to exclude pupils. Exclusion could only be justified in case of an 'ostentatious wearing of religious signs' ('*le port ostentatoire des signes religieux*'), implying proselytism, or in case of a disordering effect on the school curriculum, such as a refusal to participate in physical education (Durand-Prinborgue 1996: 79-80). However, this is unlikely to please anybody. The ruling of the *Conseil d'Etat* can easily be circumvented by claiming that the *hijab* is being worn in an 'ostentatious' or 'disordering' way, and expulsions have been reported since 1995. In addition, some defenders of *laïcité* have attempted to raise a cry of 'judges against the Republic' (Coq 1995), and to have this decision overturned by the introduction of a law against the *hijab*.

This chapter has undoubtedly been more critical of the arguments employed by opponents of the *hijab* than the arguments employed by its supporters. However, I hope there is some balance in this respect, for two reasons. Firstly, I have argued that the *hijab* is not necessarily a Qur'anic obligation for all Muslims, though it *becomes* a Qur'anic obligation for some Muslims, in the context of a particular understanding of the purpose of the Qur'an. Secondly, I insist that opposition to the *hijab* is not in itself to be *identified* with racism—indeed, some people have opposed it in good faith in order to oppose racism and other forms of discrimination—but it is *associated* with racism in the

¹⁴⁵ 'The school cannot exclude because it is made for welcoming'.

public sphere. The *hijab* means different things to different people, whether they wear it or not, or, indeed, whether they are Muslims or not.

In making this point, I am expanding on an earlier point, that, to some people, the *hijab* means oppression, while to others, it means religious devotion or liberty; to some it implies sexism, while to others it valorises women. One Catholic priest in the Lille area told me an anecdote about having arranged a visit to a mosque for some school pupils. One girl asked the Imam why Muslim women had to wear the *hijab*, and he replied that it was to protect women from the male gaze, and to protect men from sexual temptation. The girl replied that she also found some boys attractive, and asked why they did not wear a veil to protect her from temptation. Of course, the Imam had not really been replying to her question, but had given her an already established pat answer, and so he was unable to cope with a challenge to it.

Having said that, the same point is argued by some Muslim women, who find that they are protected by the *hijab*, or that it gives them a certain dignity within the Muslim sub-culture and within the wider French society. *A fortiori*, the *hijab* can thus be seen as a feminist symbol of liberation, providing a secure social space for women which, at least symbolically, is free from male invasion. However, Muslim women who wear the *hijab* rarely express explicit support for feminism, although this is not a universal rule.¹⁴⁶

For others, the *hijab* is more of an identity statement, and this complicates the debate still further. In Paris, I saw a picture of a woman on a public beach, dressed in a bikini and *hijab*. In this case, it is unlikely that the *hijab* was being worn for religious reasons, otherwise the rest of the body would have also been covered. One interviewee, Naïm, told me that he had seen girls leaving school, wearing the *hijab* and smoking cigarettes. To him, smoking contradicted the Islamic ethos more strongly than failure to

¹⁴⁶ The writings of Fatima Mernissi (for example 1987, 1991) provide an excellent introduction to Muslim feminism.

wear the *hijab*, though he regarded himself as a 'non-practising' Muslim. When the *hijab* is worn as an identity statement in this way, or perceived as such, opponents have claimed that, since it is not being worn as a religious obligation, it should not be worn at all. However, defenders of the *hijab* have been able to reply that it is not being worn as a religious garment, and therefore in no way contradicts the principle of *laïcité*. On this subject, complexity breeds complexity.

To return to the beginning of this section, the exhibition and video project about the *hijab*, which was shown in Glasgow, demonstrated that the same diversity of perceptions existed. Interestingly, some Muslim women said that it took time for them to wear the *hijab*, that their faith had to develop to the extent that this became appropriate, and that it should not be rushed in to, never mind imposed by someone else. A similar point is made by Nicole Bourque (1998: 9), with specific reference to women converts:

Most of the female converts I talked to were Muslim for a few years before they wore a headscarf in public. These women said that they needed to be inwardly confident of their Muslim identity and devotion to Allah before they could declare their identity to the rest of British society. They said that they had to wait until their *iman* (faith) was stronger. Most of those who wear a headscarf now feel comfortable with it and say that it makes them feel more secure in public. However, as Ball (1987) indicates, some women feel self-conscious about being stared at because they have a white face underneath the scarf and have stopped wearing it as a result.

In both cases, *not* wearing the *hijab* is, at least temporarily, part of trying to be a good Muslim. In the first case, there is an attempt to develop *iman*, while in the second

case, it is felt that wearing the *hijab* would draw attention to the wearer, which goes against the spirit, if not the letter, of the Qur'anic injunctions.

8.4. Conclusion

To summarise the comparisons which have been made in this chapter, the juridical and political principle of *laïcité* is particularly significant in France, leading to a further marginalisation of Muslims *qua* religious group. It is because of this that *laïcité* and the *hijab* are the main issues of debate as regards Muslims in the educational sphere. In Britain, the questions of Muslim schools, religious education, sex education, physical education and *halal* food are more important. Nevertheless, debates regarding Islam in the educational sphere are complex (not straightforwardly 'Muslims versus non-Muslims') in both countries, and, while it might be supposed that the secular critique is particularly prominent in France, due to *laïcité*, it is also prominent in Britain.

A reflexive statement, on my own view of the *hijab*, will illustrate the significance of this chapter within the context of the thesis. My view is that the *hijab* should be permitted in state schools, because a ban would have the effect of fulfilling, in part, the agenda of the extreme right in France. On the other hand, Muslim organisations should consider the Qur'anic data and context in more depth, and emphasise that Muslim women and girls should not be forced to wear the *hijab*, nor should they *feel* obliged to wear it, and, indeed, as the Glasgow case shows, it may be inappropriate in light of the spirit of the Qur'an. Freedom of conscience should be recognised, whether the import of this, in individual cases, is the wearing of the *hijab* in state schools or not. However, this view has the limitation that it encapsulates an individualistic view of freedom, with may ultimately be an ethnocentric Western view. Because of this, the issue of Muslim

identities in the West is important, as is the observation that the *hijab* is a symbolic or even material affirmation of such identities.

As Muslim identities have often been constructed in opposition, or at least in contrast, to Western identities and values, it must be recognised that an attempt to denigrate Muslim identities, or to suppress the symbols and materials of these identities, has the opposite effect. It strengthens these identities, which in turn has the effect of exacerbating the polarisation which already exists between Islam and the West, causing further conflict and misunderstanding. In the end, it becomes impossible for Westerners to appreciate the real value of Islam, and, in a vicious circle, Islam by necessity becomes more authoritarian, and the *hijab* is more likely to be seen as an obligation which must be imposed if necessary, rather than a valid choice which expresses religious devotion or identity. If Islam and the West can demonstrate that they are capable of mutual dialogue and enrichment, this vicious circle can be avoided. But if we have already entered this vicious circle, it can no longer be avoided. Instead, we must try to break out, and this will be demanding and painful.

These observations encapsulate some of the complexity and wider significance of the debate about the *hijab* in France, including its relevance to understanding the United Kingdom. In addition, I indicated at the beginning of the chapter that the comparison between the United Kingdom and France has a particular significance of its own. Part of this comes from a better understanding of the commonsense notions about the purposes of education in each country. Although Nielsen's point about education into a national culture *versus* the rights of parents holds in both cases, the concept of education into a national culture means different things, it is culturally relative. In France, the issue here is primarily about education into the values of citizenship, within the context of a *r publique laique*. In the United Kingdom, the issue is more clouded, partly because of

a reluctance to define the essence of the national culture, and partly because of a different state polity *vis-à-vis* the religious sphere. This is not only an issue which affects Muslims—it affects other religious groups as well. One analytical consequence of this is that it becomes necessary to look at the relationships between different religions, and I address this issue in the next chapter.

9. Muslim-Christian relations

9.1. Introduction

As well as addressing the analytical consequences of Chapter 8, that is, the necessity of analysing the relationships between different religions in the context of the state polity (for example, a statute of *laïcité* or an established church), this chapter examines an arena in which the dialectic of Orientalism and Muslim identities is manifested, or in which Islam and the (Christian) West actually meet. In other words, the idea of the Christian West excludes people of another faith from consideration as *completely* a part of the West, and this itself has an impact on Muslim identities. So, this chapter addresses the contention at the end of Chapter 6, that we need to examine arenas where Islam and the West actually meet each other in order to grasp the dialectic of Orientalism and Muslim identities.

If the aims of this chapter are to address the above issues, the objectives are to make three specific comparisons, and to demonstrate their veracity and significance. If we compare Muslim-Christian dialogue in the United Kingdom and in France, we find that it is more theoretical, informal and multilateral in the United Kingdom, and, conversely, more practical, formal and bilateral in France. By this, I mean that the formal dialogue which exists in the United Kingdom is more concerned with the similarities and differences between Christianity and Islam, while in France there is more of a focus on the common concerns and aspirations of Christians and Muslims. Furthermore, formal

groups established for the purpose of Muslim-Christian dialogue are particularly important in France, whereas, in the United Kingdom, the dialogue which takes place between neighbours, colleagues and friends is more significant. In addition, significant dialogue in the United Kingdom tends to take place within a context of dialogue between several different religious confessions, whereas in France the bilateral dialogue between Muslims and Christians is more self-contained.

In this chapter, I shall demonstrate that these differences between the United Kingdom and France are to do with the social and political context, the degree and nature of secularisation, and not with theological views about dialogue. As I have taken the overall problematic as being to examine an area in which this dialectic comes to the forefront, that is, in which Muslim identities meet, or clash, with the West, there are three routes from the problematic to the conclusion, that is, the three comparisons outlined above. The first I shall call the sociological route, which is to demonstrate that Muslim-Christian dialogue is socially significant, despite, or even because of, the challenge of secularisation, and that this has different consequences in the United Kingdom and in France. The second, the ethnographic route, rests on a presentation of data from my fieldwork in these countries, particularly observations from the *Groupe d'amitié Islamo-Chrétien du Hautmont-Mouvaux*—a group which meets frequently in the vicinity of Lille—and interviews with participants and non-participants in Muslim-Christian dialogue in both countries. The third route, the theological route, examines some of the theological issues which surround dialogue for Muslims and Christians (Protestant and Catholic), examining some issues on which there is agreement among Christians, or among Muslims, and other issues on which there is disagreement. While neither one of these routes takes us all the way from the problematic to the conclusion, it

is my submission that taking all three routes together does make this possible (even if the metaphor breaks down at this point).

9.2. The sociological route

There is a temptation for sociologists to exaggerate when discussing secularisation, that is, having proved one thing, to assume that it proves something else. For example, less people go to church, therefore religion has lost its social significance. Alternatively, secularisation has occurred in many countries, therefore it means the same in all cases, and affects all religions equally. The first of these examples has been frequently discussed and debated by sociologists, over a long period of time. Some, like Steve Bruce (1995, 1996), ably defend the proposition that the statistics *consistently* show a decline in religious practice and belonging. Others, like David Martin (1969), argue that the statistics merely demonstrate that there has been a decline in certain kinds of religious activity, mainly going to church on Sundays, that such activity is not the same as religious belief or belonging, and that the secularisation hypothesis is premised on a ‘golden age’ of religious practice which never really was.

The second example is more relevant to this chapter. While it is legitimate (though controversial) to speak of secularisation as a phenomenon which has occurred throughout, and, to some extent, outside, the West, it has occurred in different ways. For example, the Church of England is the established church in England, a status which emerged from the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century, and particularly from the doctrine of Erastianism,¹⁴⁷ alternatively known as Byzantinism or Caesaro-Papism:

¹⁴⁷ The term comes from Thomas Erastus (1524-1583), whose teachings have been discussed in detail by Ruth Wesel-Roth (1954: especially 90-124), though she does not discuss their significance to the development of Anglicanism.

In Erastus's view, and the same should be said of nearly all the Erastian divines of the 16th and 17th centuries, there was no claim to set a purely secular power above the church. What they claimed was an entire recognition of the coercive jurisdiction of the civil authority in a state which tolerated *but one religion and that the true one*. What they refuse to allow is any competing jurisdiction (Figgis 1948: 211).

This doctrine was in direct opposition to the doctrine of 'toleration', which implied that different religious confessions should be tolerated within the same state. However, the 'settlement' between church and state evolved. Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury at the time of the Reformation, recognised the unconditional authority of the state (that is, this recognition was not subject to any test of doctrinal purity), while the temporal authority of the church, under the supreme authority of the monarch, was also recognised.¹⁴⁸ Furthermore:

With the development of toleration Parliament has come to consist of men of all religions and none. Modern Erastianism claims the right of a body so composed to adjudicate on matters of belief either in person or by deputy, and would allow ecclesiastical causes to be decided by civil judges, who might every one of them be agnostics (Figgis 1948: 211).

¹⁴⁸ This settlement was expressed in 'Cranmer's Oath to the King for his Temporalities', which read: 'I, Thomas Cranmer, renounce and utterly forsake all such clauses, words, sentences, and grants, which I have of the pope's holiness in his bulls of the archbishoprick of Canterbury, that in any manner was, is, or may be hurtful to your highness, your heirs, successors, estate, or dignity royal: knowledging myself to take and hold the said archbishoprick immediately, and only, of your highness, and of none other. Most lowly beseeching the same for restitution of the temporalities of the said archbishoprick; promising to be faithful, true and obedient subject to your said highness, your heirs and successors, during my life. So help me God and the holy evangelists! (Cox 1844: 460)'

So now the Church of England exercises a role in the government of the state, as part of which some bishops sit in the House of Lords, and as a consequence of which the views of senior clergy, particularly the Archbishop of Canterbury, receive some publicity. In addition, the church submits its senior appointments to the approval of the state. Strangely, perhaps, this is not an issue of *significant* conflict, or even debate, at the present time. The Church of Scotland has a lesser role in Scotland, but still has the status of the national church. Although there is no national or established church in Wales or Northern Ireland, we can say as a general rule that secularisation in the United Kingdom, where it has occurred, should be analysed as a social process, or a change of *mentalités*, but not of political structure. It is important to be clear about the specific nature of secularisation, and the degree to which it has occurred, and such clarity is not facilitated by simply debating whether or not secularisation has happened.

As far as the place of Muslims in contemporary British society is concerned, the principle of establishment has a number of consequences. On the one hand, some strands of Islam are clearly in sympathy with the Erastian principle of a single jurisdiction over temporal and religious matters. Muslims are formally equal with Christians, as they can be civil judges, and, as such, can decide on ecclesiastical matters. Furthermore, although there is the appearance that the Church of England has an unfair inbuilt advantage, it can sometimes be of help in bringing other religions into public consultation. Religious groups sometimes act against their apparent interests. For example, when attempts were made to 'Christianise' the 1988 Education Reform Act, the then Archbishop of Canterbury and Bishop of London were instrumental in urging the House of Lords to reject them.

On the other hand, few bishops have challenged the principle of establishment, and there is a fundamental inequality between Islam and Christianity, particularly the Church

of England as the pre-eminent religious body. On a more concrete issue such as blasphemy, which Salman Rushdie was accused of, the Church of England is protected by law, but Islam is not. Indeed, on this issue, Christians may have something to lose by seeking closer relations with Muslims in the United Kingdom. Having said that, the blasphemy laws do not protect other Christian denominations, so the denominational diversity of the United Kingdom may mean that Muslims and (some) Christians have something to gain.

If this is the case, Muslims and Christians in France certainly have something to gain, as secularisation has influenced political structures as well as social process and *mentalités*. The term in use is *laïcité*, which is in marked contrast to establishment, and it should also be distinguished from secularisation. Notwithstanding the etymology of the word (which refers to the laity, as opposed to the clergy), *laïcité* is essentially a juridical principle. It dates from the law of 1882, which separated the Catholic church from public education, the Jules Ferry law of 1905, which separated church and state, and Article II of the 1958 Constitution:¹⁴⁹

La France est une République indivisible, laïque, démocratique et sociale. Elle assure l'égalité devant la loi de tous les citoyens sans distinctions d'origine, de race ou de religion. Elle respecte toutes les croyances (Godechot, ed., 1995: 426).¹⁵⁰

All beliefs are respected, but within the framework of *laïcité* as established in 1905. This framework was clear:

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¹⁴⁹ For a historical view of *laïcité*, see Costa-Lascoux (1996).

¹⁵⁰ 'France is a Republic, indivisible, *laïque*, democratic and social. Equality of all citizens before the law, without distinction on the grounds of origin, race or religion, is assured. The beliefs of all are respected'.

... la République ne reconnaît, ne salarie ni ne subventionne aucun culte
(Durand-Prinborgne 1996: 21).¹⁵¹

Though *laïcité* is used as a synonym of secularism or secularity (dictionaries tend to translate *laïque* as secular), there is an analytical distinction to be drawn, opposing the juridical nature of *laïcité* to the socio-political nature of secularity. Nevertheless, Wilson's (1966: xiv) famous definition of secularisation as 'the process whereby religious thinking, practice and institutions lose social significance' points to something which did happen in France in the late nineteenth century: religious thinking, practice and institutions lost much of their *legal* significance. Indeed, one could say that turn-of-the-century France saw what Mohammed Mouaqit (1984) called a spiritual, temporal and ideological process of secularisation and laicisation—in other words, secularisation and laicisation were part of a common process.

It is important to make the distinction between *laïcité* and secularisation because of the conflict which there has been over *laïcité* in France, exemplified by the *affaire du foulard*, which has often been exacerbated by a lack of clarity on all sides. The conflict cannot be analysed, never mind resolved, if we are not clear about the meaning of *laïcité*. Nevertheless, it is important to make a connection with secularisation, because some Muslims (and other religious people) see *laïcité* as a turning away from religion, or as antithetical to the 'ideal' of a religious state. As such, it is seen as an atheisation of society which must be resisted, not just because of the intrinsic value of religion, but also because of the 'moral decline' which is associated with secularisation. On the other hand, some people have judged the wearing of the *hijab* in school to be an unacceptable

¹⁵¹ '... the Republic neither recognises, pays the salaries of, nor subsidises any religion or act of worship'.

demand that Islam be *recognised*, that is, be made an exception to the principle of *laïcité* (which they see as guaranteeing religious freedom) in the educational institutions of the Republic. The lawmakers of 1882 considered the school to be the starting point for a laicisation of the whole state (Durand-Prinborgne 1996: 20-1). So it is felt that any de-laicisation of the school will lead to a de-laicisation of the Republic, a new obscurantism, and an Islamic invasion of the French body politic.

At the same time, it seems as if *laïcité* and Muslim-Christian dialogue are intertwined. The simplest way of expounding this hypothesis is to say that Muslims and Christians are faced with the common challenge of *laïcité*, and this prompts them to dialogue. This is why I suggested earlier that that Muslim-Christian dialogue is socially significant *because of* the challenge of secularisation, not just in spite of it. In the United Kingdom, on the other hand, there is no statute of *laïcité*, so this particular incentive does not exist, and, as I have suggested, Christians may have something to lose, for example on the issue of blasphemy laws. There is a logic to this hypothesis, because the establishment of one religious group in a particular state creates an inequality between that and other religious groups. The principle of dialogue necessarily involves some sort of equality, otherwise it is not really dialogue, even though there may be a profound tolerance. In the United Kingdom, belonging to a 'non-Christian religion' may confer 'outsider status', implying that one is regarded by others as a 'rule-breaker', and, consequently, one may regard those others, one's 'judges', as outsiders (Becker 1963: 1-2; Coney and Tritter 1996: 5). This does not seem to make for effective dialogue.

Andrew Wingate (1988), in his account of Muslim-Christian dialogue in Birmingham, was very conscious of the problems involved, the small number of participants, and the suspicion of co-believers in both communities. In addition, this dialogue tended to involve a particular kind of Muslim and a particular kind of Christian:

Wingate's account refers primarily to Muslims from a Sufi-oriented tradition (those from a more 'orthodox' or 'exoteric' background found this dialogue particularly difficult); and the Christians who participated were primarily from theological seminaries.

On the other hand, although dialogue in France has not been easy, and the participation of the Muslim and Christian 'elites' (priests, imams and other leaders of both religions) has been considerably stronger than that of the ordinary believers, it is not the case that the participation of ordinary believers has been insignificant. In a way, this is quite surprising, because ordinary believers who participate are likely to have work or other commitments, as well as being heavily involved with their own religious community (for example, their local church, denomination and ecumenical group). Dialogue in France has also led to projects involving young people in the *banlieues*, and inter-religious marriages happen, even if they are uncommon. In general, it has been said, dialogue in France has worked well (Babès 1996: 41). In addition, there has been Muslim-Christian dialogue on the subject of *laïcité*, such as the collaborative work by the *Groupe de recherches islamo-chrétien* (1996), a group of Muslim and Christian researchers based in Brussels, Dakar, Paris, Rabat and Tunis, and concrete dialogue which I discuss in section 9.3, the ethnographic section of this chapter. This shows that the correlation between *laïcité* and dialogue must not be seen as a unilinear causation. Not only does a consciousness of *laïcité* become a cause of dialogue, but dialogue also brings about different understandings of *laïcité*.

Coming back to the purpose of this section, which is to show that Muslim-Christian dialogue is socially significant, the existence of such dialogue says something about the social *ambience* in which it takes place. Many participants in Muslim-Christian dialogue would say that such dialogue is 'miraculous', given the history of radical antipathy between Christianity and Islam from the time of the Crusades (and, to some extent, even

earlier). It certainly does show that a major social change has taken place. Does it reflect a change in the attitudes of Christians and Muslims to each other, to their own faiths, to their ideas of who Self and Other are? Or does it reflect a wider social change, which goes beyond the small number of participants in dialogue, or even the participants in organised religion? It could be either, but the sheer comprehensiveness of the change involved does seem to indicate that it could reflect a wider change.

It also underlines the value of the comparative approach, and the significance of the dialectic of Orientalism and Muslim identities. The social and political significance of religion is different in the United Kingdom and in France, which has an impact on the context in which, and sometimes against which, Muslim identities are constructed. As I have shown, there is a threefold distinction to be drawn between the Church of England, other Christian denominations in the United Kingdom, and the churches in France, as far as their structural relationship with Islam is concerned.

This is particularly significant in the context of Orientalism, as the perception of Islam which has existed in different national and ecclesiastical contexts has ramifications for the nature and significance of Muslim-Christian dialogue. In both countries, there have been what are clearly misconceptions about Islam, such as the use of the term 'Mohammedanism' (French: *mahométisme*), on the basis of Muhammad having the same place in Islam as Christ in Christianity, or of Islam being a system of apostolic succession culminating in Muhammad (see Said 1995: 280). There is a need for dialogue to clear up some of these misconceptions, and the existence of dialogue demonstrates that there is a social *ambience* conducive to it. In other words, dialogue shows that the social and political significance of religion, even at a formal level, is in a process of change, and dialogue plays a part in this process.

9.3. The ethnographic route

Indeed, the ethnographic research which I did in the United Kingdom and France indicated a diversity of forms of dialogue, and of attitudes to dialogue. Some of the logical consequences of this sociological model were shown not to be the case, if the model is understood synchronically. In other words, there were many similarities between the United Kingdom and France, which shows that the model has to be understood diachronically, underlining the point about the social and political significance of religion being in a process of change, and dialogue playing a part in this process. Of course, it cannot be established that this ethnographic material is typical of either country, as it is locally based, but it does corroborate the broader sociological and theological observations which are in this chapter, and it underlines the importance of understanding the issue diachronically.

In France, I was able to do a great deal of participant observation within the *Groupe d'amitié Islamo-Chrétien du Hautmont-Mouvaux*, and the associated *Association Bammate*. The *Groupe Islamo-Chrétien* is one of the longest standing groups engaged in Muslim-Christian dialogue, and meets in the Jesuit-run *Centre Spirituel du Hautmont* in Mouvaux, a town in the Lille conurbation. Similar groups have been established and dissolved within a few years (see Elghazi 1990: 104-7). However, the Hautmont group has held an annual weekend conference since 1979, along with regular meetings and courses. It also led to the formation in 1991 of the *Association Bammate*, which addresses the need for research into Muslim and Christian religious identities, carried out by 'ordinary' Muslims and Christians themselves, rather than academics and researchers. (The Hautmont group has inspired the formation of other Muslim-Christian groups—such as in the nearby town of Halluin, and further away in Saint Amand and Maubeuge, towns

in the south of the *département*—something which they consider a particular evidence of success.

Towards the end of 1996, the *Association Bammate* carried out a series of studies on *laïcité* in France as it affects, and is seen by, Muslims and Christians (Catholic and Protestant). A number of problems which affect Muslims under *laïcité* were evoked: the *affaire du foulard*; the need for finance as a result of the exclusion of public money based on the law of 1905, which has led to Saudi and Algerian influence over the mosques (for example, it was stated that the *Mosquée de Lyon* was 90 per cent financed by Saudi money); Muslim burial rites and the desire of some to return to their country of origin for burial; and the slaughter of animals for eating according to Islamic law.

One participant, Aïsha, a Muslim woman who would be classified, using the typology developed in section 6.2, as positive about religious integration and considering it to be a *fait accompli*, circulated a paper at one of these meetings, summarising the relationship between Islam and *laïcité* in France as follows:

Si on parle de fait religieux, comme il existe un fait chrétien en France, il y a maintenant un fait islamique. Notre société a un rapport problématique au religieux: la religion a été progressivement depuis un siècle refoulée vers la sphère familiale ou privée et se retrouve à nouveau confrontée à ce problème religieux avec l'Islam. Dans les années 1980, l'Islam surgit dans le champ social français: cette religion vient remettre en cause l'équilibre établi par la laïcité. Ce phénomène est aggravé par le fait que l'Islam devient une religion de France regroupant des citoyens français.¹⁵²

¹⁵² 'If we speak of a religious phenomenon, as a Christian phenomenon exists in France, there is now an Islamic phenomenon. Our society has a problematic *rapport* with the religious: for the last century, religion has been driven back into the familial or private sphere and finds itself confronted anew with this religious problem alongside Islam. During the 1980s, Islam appeared on the French social scene:

There is a perception here of *laïcité* as a challenge for Islam in particular, also for Christianity and for religion in general. Yet this is not seen as an issue concerning the power of religion over society, but, rather, the inability of society to come to terms with the religious. Thus, religion is taught within the household and not in the school—it is kept at arm's length, neither part of the society nor excluded from it. It is considered that Islam is challenging this ambiguity, which itself is seen (elsewhere) as constituting an equilibrium in French society. In addition, Islam is, in a sense, speaking on behalf of a wider constituency, which includes other religions, and which is categorically a *French* constituency.

To take one example of this, which demonstrates that *laïcité* is contested within a context of Muslim-Christian relations, we have seen that the school is an important symbol of, and locus for, contests over *laïcité*. This can be seen in the Jules Ferry laws, the *affaire du foulard*, and the teaching of religion in the home. It can also be seen in the presence of Muslim pupils in Catholic private schools. Naïm told me that many Muslim parents prefer to send their children to private schools run by the Catholic church. In some cases, this is because they are perceived as providing a better moral and religious education than the state schools, and/or because boys and girls are often segregated. In his own case, he sent his daughter to a Catholic school because the local school was 'débordé' (overworked, conflictual), though he would have preferred to send her to an *école laïque*. Both cases are similar though, because they exist within a context where the private, the Catholic private school, the individual/familial, religion, morality and the elite, are contrasted with the public, the state school, society, *laïcité*/citizenship, liberty/libertarianism and the masses.

this religion has brought the equilibrium established by *laïcité* into question. This phenomenon is aggravated by the fact that Islam is becoming a religion of France, bringing French citizens together.'

According to Michael—a Catholic priest in Glasgow who has a long involvement in trilateral dialogue between Christians, Muslims and Jews—there are problems with creating an awareness of the need for dialogue among Christians in the United Kingdom. He said that a common attitude was that, since they believed they had the truth, there was no point in dialogue with an ‘exotic’ religion such as Islam. Dialogue with Jews would be worthwhile, since Christianity came from Judaism, but other religions had no such value. However, common ground was often found on issues such as religious education and abortion, both of which imply a degree of resistance to secularisation, as well as social justice and some international issues. Robert, a director of the Inter-Faith Network for the United Kingdom, said that this sometimes led to more conservative members of a given religious group participating in dialogue for utilitarian reasons, despite their suspicions of the religious Other. In time, he argued, people who entered into dialogue for practical reasons would come to appreciate the spiritual significance of the project, and *vice-versa*. Robert also suggested that inter-faith groups in the United Kingdom tended to look at issues of common concern relating to the local community, so dialogue was often between individual churches and individual mosques, or between local ecumenical groups and members of other faiths. Michael’s point and Robert’s first point tend to support the hypothesis that the importance of dialogue varies with the degree of secularisation, and that dialogue in France is likely to constitute a response to *laïcité*, though, as Robert’s second point implies, local considerations must also be taken into account.

However, some of the issues which were discussed in Muslim-Christian dialogue in France, and which did arise from *laïcité* or secularisation, have also arisen in the United Kingdom in a completely different context. I cited the exclusion of public money for the building of mosques in France, which has led to Saudi or Algerian funding, and, by

extension, influence over the mosques. This is also characteristic of the United Kingdom (see, for example, Lewis 1994a: 71; Nielsen 1995b: 48), where a significant proportion of the finances for constructing new mosques comes from Pakistan or Saudi Arabia. More controversially, the Muslim College in London was partly funded by the Call of Islam Society, based in Libya, and the Saddam Hussein Mosque in Birmingham, unsurprisingly, was funded by the Iraqi regime. Sometimes, this can create a vicious circle: Muslims have difficulty in obtaining finance, so they are forced to accept funding from overseas, which contributes to an image of Islam as being 'foreign' or even threatening (particularly as Libya and Iraq are perceived as enemies of the West, and 'terrorist states'), which contributes to difficulties which Muslims have in obtaining public money. Nevertheless, I think that there is a growing consciousness among Muslims in the United Kingdom and France of the need to be self-sufficient, enabling this vicious circle to be broken. Another issue which I cited with reference to France was Muslim parents sending their children to Catholic schools, because they are seen as providing a better moral and religious education than schools in the state sector. This is also true of the United Kingdom.

Muslim-Christian relations, including dialogue, are clearly not confined to subjects arising from *laïcité* or secularisation. Other social issues are frequently discussed, as are international issues, and there is a frequent desire articulated to find out more about each other's religious practices, and how they are experienced 'deep down'. A document which was written by Guy Lepoutre (1996) about the *Groupe Islamo-Chrétien* stated that the dialogue at Hautmont had social implications, citing as an example the five resolutions on the equilibrium of society which were adopted at the weekend of 1989 (which was on the subject '*Vivre ensemble nos différences*');

1. 'prendre les moyens pour éviter la ségrégation dans l'attribution des logements';
2. 'associer tous les habitants à la gestion et à l'animation de leur quartier ou de leur ville';
3. 'ne faire aucune discrimination dans l'embauche et l'attribution des postes de travail';
4. 'prendre en compte les besoins de la jeunesse et définir leur place avec eux';
5. 'encourager davantage les familles maghrébines et françaises à inscrire leurs enfants aux cours de langue arabe'.¹⁵³

On the significance of such resolutions, the document continues by arguing:

Même si le Groupe du Hautmont n'a pas de moyens opérationnels pour que soient appliquées ces résolutions, nous voyons qu'elles signifient des prises de conscience communes et font progresser l'opinion publique.¹⁵⁴

International issues which were frequently discussed included Algeria and Palestine, subjects which also arose in discussions I had with Muslims and other respondents in the United Kingdom. Michael insisted that when international issues were discussed in dialogue, it was essential to ask how they apply to 'us', that is, to the group of people engaged in dialogue. This was to avoid the problem of members of a particular religion feeling that they have to take a specific line on certain issues, and finding it difficult to

¹⁵³ '... to find the means to avoid segregation in the allocation of housing...; to involve all inhabitants in the running and activities of their district or town...; not to discriminate in hiring people or in the allocation of jobs...; to take the needs of young people into account and to define their place with them...; encourage more North African and French families to enrol their children in Arabic language classes...'

¹⁵⁴ 'Even if the Hautmont group does not have the operational means that these resolutions be applied, we can see that they signify a collective awareness and contribute to the progression of public opinion.'

stand out. An example of this is discussion between Muslims and Jews on the subject of Palestine/Israel. Similarly, Christians who have been missionaries, some of whom have experience of persecution by Muslims, often want to raise this from the beginning of inter-faith encounters, and sometimes even participate in dialogue with the specific aim of raising this issue.

Nevertheless, as I have argued elsewhere in this thesis, in sections 6.4 and 7.2, discussions of international issues indicate that Islam can represent an international consciousness. This can and sometimes does involve an inter-religious consciousness, intertwined with a strong aspiration for peace. This is reminiscent of Hans Küng's (1995: ii) dictum:

No peace among the nations without peace among the religions.

No peace among the religions without dialogue between the religions.

No dialogue between the religions without investigation of the foundation of the religions.

We will return to this subject shortly, but what I am trying to do here is to illustrate something of the diversity of subjects which are covered in Muslim-Christian dialogue, since this contributes to the diversity of representations of Islam, and to the diversity of Muslim identities. A good way to do this is to quote from my fieldwork notes, from the first meeting of the *Groupe Islamo-Chrétien* which I attended. The extract is fairly lengthy, so I have placed it in the appendix. It enables us to capture something of this diversity, and the extent to which dialogue can lead to a different constitution of Self and Other. It should be noted that subjects under discussion, at just one meeting, included international issues (the situations in Algeria and Palestine), social issues (French

immigration policy, integration, human dignity, religious responsibilities towards 'foreigners'), 'religious' issues (representation of Muslims in France, the Pope's visit to France, religious festivals, prayer, the meaning of death), culture (Iranian cinema) and dialogue itself (multilateral and bilateral). It should also be noted that Self was constituted as Christians *and* Muslims who participated in dialogue, who accepted each other, and who opposed violence and social repression. This clearly problematises an essentialist notion of a Muslim identity.

I do not have any ethnographic data on bilateral Muslim-Christian dialogue in the United Kingdom, though I do have some interview data, some of which is cited in this chapter. There is a Muslim-Christian forum which meets in Glasgow, but this is by invitation only, and consists of representatives from some Christian denominations in Scotland, and some leading Muslims. I was never invited to this forum, but since Protestants and Catholics have enough trouble co-existing in Glasgow, it is understandable that relations 'with other faiths' will be a fairly taboo subject, and that such dialogue will need to take place in as low-key a manner as possible.

This is itself a significant finding, however, because it indicates another barrier to dialogue in the United Kingdom which does not exist in France. Although Glasgow is a special case within the United Kingdom when it comes to sectarianism, it is true to say that the denominational diversity of Christianity in the United Kingdom, though hierarchical, contrasts with the predominance of the Catholic church in most parts of France. As a result, there is something threatening about coming face to face with what is perceived to be a homogeneous 'opposition' for Christians in the United Kingdom, whereas this is less true of France.

This should not be exaggerated, however, because French Christians do not speak on all subjects with one mind and one voice, and because dialogue in the United

Kingdom does happen. Indeed, Protestants and Catholics who participate in dialogue with other, 'non-Christian' religions, often find that their stereotypes of each other are challenged and corrected. There is an apparent lack of open bilateral dialogue in the United Kingdom between Muslims and Christians on the subject of religion---Robert agreed that bilateral dialogue in the United Kingdom was less public, because the bilateral issue was more prominent in people's minds in France. Nevertheless, there are two important issues which must be considered, namely the existence of other forums in which there is a formal or informal dialogue between Muslims and 'non-Muslims', and multilateral dialogue which includes Muslims and Christians. Examples of the former include discussions with education authorities about the provision of *halal* food in schools, and informal conversations between neighbours. I did find that there was a tendency for Christians in the United Kingdom to assume that Muslims would be in agreement with each other, and one interviewee (Jackie) agreed with me on this. Certainly, it is not only Christians who display this tendency, and it can also be found in France. Although the Christians with whom I had contact in France were generally more educated, as far as Islam is concerned, than in the United Kingdom, the heuristic hypothesis that Christians in the United Kingdom feel more threatened by the *perceived* unity of Muslims goes some way towards explaining why they should be more willing to participate in multilateral than bilateral dialogue.

On the second of the two phenomena cited above, multilateral dialogue which includes Muslims and Christians, I do have some ethnographic material from the Glasgow Sharing of Faiths Group, and an 'interfaith pilgrimage' which they organised. There was only one Muslim present at the meeting, and he was a Scottish convert to Islam, and there was not really dialogue (in the sense of searching for areas of agreement, and seeking to understand areas of disagreement, through discussion),

because the purpose of the meeting was to plan the 'pilgrimage'. However, it was clear that most of the participants were at ease with the situation, as the discussion was free and flowing, almost like an informal discussion, as opposed to the more formal dialogue which took place at the *Groupe Islamo-Chrétien*. In addition, other meetings of the same group have consisted of 'stories' from the different religions which have been represented—this is 'theoretical' dialogue, as the term was defined in the introduction to this chapter, because it is more concerned with expounding the religion than revealing what it means to the believer in his or her social context.

The interfaith pilgrimage was a particularly imaginative form of dialogue, and one which was significant for its educative value, which, as I explain later in this chapter, is a useful criterion for evaluating inter-religious dialogue. About fifty 'pilgrims' from different faith communities participated, and visited a mosque (the Carrington Street mosque, which is marked in Figure 6.5 in Chapter 6), synagogue, Hindu temple, Sikh Gurdwara and an Anglican cathedral. At each place, one or two people, who normally worshipped there, spoke and answered questions about a number of issues, *inter alia* the building, the religious significance of any interior objects, the worship, beliefs, and history of their religion. I noted at the time that many of our hosts (Jewish and Sikh as well as Muslim) were falling over themselves to explain the segregation of men and women in their places of worship, in a way which would not cause any offence. I mention this because it demonstrates that there is still some way to go—where people are comfortable with each other in a situation of dialogue, they should in theory become more comfortable about expressing their beliefs and not worry about other people taking offence.

Although the formal dialogue which takes place in the United Kingdom tends to be multilateral, Robert referred to a 'process of encounter and conversation ... also taking

place in a non-structured setting', which, he explained, referred to a process by which formal multilateral dialogue enabled participants to get to know each other, leading to an informal bilateral exchange. As an example of this, he referred to a Shi'a Muslim in his inter-faith group, who usually invited him home for continued discussion after the formal group meeting.

Of course, multilateral dialogue exists in France as well. In Lille, there was an 'Assisi meeting' (*rencontre d'Assise*) on 27 October 1996, the tenth anniversary of the Pope's meeting with leaders of the major world religions in Assisi. Christians (Catholic and Protestant), Muslims and Buddhists (Cambodian, Vietnamese and Laotian) were present, and Jewish representatives were involved in the preparation.

I commented earlier that my research indicated a diversity of attitudes to dialogue, as well as forms of dialogue, and it is worth looking at this diversity in more detail, because diversity is a major theme of this thesis, and because this diversity in relation to dialogue is a part of the diversity inherent in the dialectic of Orientalism and Muslim identities. A simple list of these attitudes could include the view that Islam and Christianity are compatible or even complementary, that they have something in common, that dialogue is a means of creating peace, that it is a good thing but with certain problems, that it is a means of *dawa* or mission, that the other religion represents the religion of the Other, or that different religions are inevitably in a situation of conflict. I discuss some of these attitudes now.

As I have argued, Christian-Muslim dialogue in France is often seen in the context of *laïcité*. Fatima believed that the problems facing young people in contemporary France made Muslim-Christian dialogue particularly important, and agreed that the common challenge of *laïcité* was one possible reason for this dialogue being particularly strong in France, as compared to the United Kingdom. Amo Ferhati, however, saw

dialogue firmly in a context of *laïcité*—his association had organised a festival for *Eid ul-Adha* which had been secularised (*laïcisé*) by inviting members of the Jewish and Christian communities to participate.

Looking at the diversity of attitudes to dialogue which are not connected to *laïcité*, as has been said, Jean considered Islam and Christianity to be compatible, even complimentary, and his own practice of Islam was also oriented towards Christianity. A similar viewpoint was expressed by some participants in the interfaith pilgrimage in Glasgow, that all faiths were pointing in essentially the same direction. Although this was the position of the Hindus and Sikhs, and not the Muslims and Christians, it was a belief to which Muslim and Christian participants were exposed, and which they clearly respected.

Naïm also said that Christianity and Islam had many things in common, something which he had felt very strongly as a result of his own participation in Muslim-Christian dialogue. However, he noted that for many Muslims there were aspects of Christianity which were not incompatible with Islam, but for them represented the religion of the Other, and that this caused them to reject these aspects. An example which Naïm gave was a high regard for Jesus (*'Issa*), an important Prophet in Islam (and mentioned far more times in the Qur'an than Muhammad), but who is perceived by some Muslims as representative of Christianity.

Hassan saw dialogue as a means to create peace and understanding between different religions, traditions and communities, in France and elsewhere, which was also the purpose behind the interfaith pilgrimage. Hassan participated in the *rencontre d'Assise*, which also emphasised dialogue as a means towards peace between religions, communities and human beings. When I asked him to speak about this, he said:

[On a voulu] montrer surtout que la notion de paix est transcendante. Parce que, a côté de ça, on entend dire que c'est les religions qui sont la cause de tous les problèmes, et forcément, pour l'homme de foi, il essaye aussi de montrer que d'ici il vient aussi des hommes de paix—de paix de l'âme, de paix de l'esprit, de paix du coeur—et que si nous l'avons perdu c'est parce que nous avons oublié ... des directives divines.¹⁵⁵

Ibrahim and Ahmed raised certain dangers with Muslim-Christian dialogue, though they were both committed to it. For Ahmed, who had done research on the history of Sufi Islam, the problem was one of '*comparatisme*'—Christians and Muslims becoming obsessed with comparing their respective religions instead of engaging in genuine dialogue. Comparisons, he argued, should be left to the specialists, otherwise mutual understanding could be damaged. In some circumstances, this could raise questions about the motives for participating in dialogue, such as people who participate *in order to* raise certain issues, such as religious persecution by members of another religion, as is mentioned above, or even people who participate in the hope that members of the other religion will convert. However, such people often become disillusioned very quickly, and give up, or else they find a difference between the exclusive doctrines of their religion and the discovery of other people who also had a faith in God. On a similar, though not identical, note, Ibrahim was committed to dialogue because he believed the development of mutual understanding to be important, particularly as Muslims and Christians had much in common concerning values and morality (theology being a

¹⁵⁵ '[We wanted] to show that the notion of peace is transcendent. Because, at the same time, people are heard saying that religions are the cause of all the world's problems, and so the man of faith must also try to show that men of peace also come from here—peace of soul, peace of spirit, peace of heart—and that if we've lost it it's because we've forgotten ... divine instructions.'

different issue). For him, the problem was that Muslims and Christians displayed a lack of understanding of their own religions, and so could not engage in effective dialogue:

... dans un premier temps, il faut quand même que les deux parties, musulmans et chrétiens, connaissent mieux leurs religions. On ne peut pas ... dialoguer, apporter aux autres, sans bien connaître sa religion. Et, si vous voulez, il y a beaucoup, même de gens dans les groupes islamo-chrétiens, qui sont musulmans très petit peu, ou chrétiens très petit peu. Moi, je ne vois pas comment on peut faire le dialogue islamo-chrétien, pour un musulman, sans faire la prière. Pour moi, ça n'a pas de sens vraiment.¹⁵⁶

This was really a constructive criticism, because Ibrahim was committed to Muslim-Christian dialogue. However, inter-religious relations are sometimes more strained, as the note from Madame Debeir to members of the *Groupe Islamo-Chrétien*, cited in Chapter 3, demonstrates. In a similarly negative vein, a Muslim correspondent of the French Islamologist Bruno Etienne insisted:

Lorsque deux religions s'affrontent, ce n'est pas pour se comparer et se décerner les compliments mais pour se combattre. C'est pour cela que jamais vous ne nous entendrez dire que nous respectons votre religion... De votre part, ce respect à l'égard de la nôtre paraît une abdication: vous renoncez à

¹⁵⁶ '... well to begin with, both parties, Muslims and Christians, must know their own religions better. One cannot ... participate in dialogue, bringing something to others, without knowing one's own religion well. And, if you like, there are many people, even in Muslim-Christian groups, who are only very slightly Muslim, or very slightly Christian. I cannot see how a Muslim can be involved in Muslim-Christian dialogue without praying. For me, that doesn't really have any meaning.'

nous imposer votre foi, nous ne renoncrons jamais à étendre l'Islam (cited in Etienne 1987: 22-3).¹⁵⁷

Less aggressively, though still with a negative portrayal of Islam, was the invitation from the Baptist church in Lille to hear a talk from a Pakistani woman who had converted from Islam to Christianity. Their leaflet of invitation used Arabic writing and design, and was clearly aimed at Muslims in Lille with the intention of encouraging more conversions to Christianity. The *Groupe Islamo-Chrétien* were more balanced, and outlined their aims as friendship, convergence between the two cultures and religions, respect for doctrinal differences, and a mutual spiritual stimulation. The tension between these aims and the place of such missionary activities in Christianity is also expressed:

Ces quatre mots expriment une option qui va dans le sens du dialogue; ce n'est pas évident pour le chrétien que je suis qui vit une tension entre 'dialogue' et 'annonce du Message'. Des frères évangéliques d'autres églises chrétiennes mettent la priorité dans l'annonce du Message et l'invitation à la conversion. Leurs communautés dans la région comportent une bonne proportion de maghrébins—qui, souvent, n'étaient musulmans que de très loin—devenus chrétiens... Cette priorité donnée à l'annonce du Message s'appuie sur des phrases telles que: 'Je suis la Voie, la Vérité et la Vie' que nul chrétien ne peut récuser. Mais le risque est de ne pas respecter son interlocuteur, de diaboliser ses écritures et de repartir en guerre de religion... Notre option est autre.... Il s'agit de nous respecter et de nous aimer mutuellement, en nous reconnaissant

¹⁵⁷ 'When two religions face each other, it is not for comparing each other and awarding compliments, but for fighting each other. That is why you will never hear us saying that we respect your religion.... From our point of view, this respect for ours looks like a surrender: you renounce imposing your faith on us, we will never renounce the propagation of Islam.'

dans nos différences: oui, ces différences bien reconnues permettent l'unité. Nous nous encourageons à vivre nos fidélités respectives et nous croyons à la fidélité de Dieu qui nous conduit vers la vérité toute entière... (Lepoutre 1996).¹⁵⁸

9.4. The theological route

This leads us conveniently onto the theological route from the problematic of examining a concrete example of the dialectic of Orientalism and Muslim identities, to the conclusion that Muslim-Christian dialogue is comparatively theoretical, informal and multilateral in the United Kingdom, while it is practical, formal and bilateral in France. Here, I show that there is not a significant theological difference between Catholicism and Protestantism, respectively the dominant strands of Christianity in France and the United Kingdom. This makes it possible to reject one alternative to the hypothesis that it is the social and political contexts which have the most significant influence on the different dynamics and extents of dialogue in the United Kingdom and France, that alternative being that theological differences are as or even more significant. The theological issues are also worth discussing in their own right, for four reasons. Firstly, the Catholic and Protestant views may be broadly similar, but, as I demonstrate, they are diverse and ambiguous, and this contributes to the diversity inherent in the dialectic of

¹⁵⁸ 'These four words express an option which goes in the direction of dialogue; it is not easy for the Christian which I am who lives a tension between "dialogue" and "announcing the Message". Some Evangelical brothers of other Christian churches prioritise the announcing of the Message and invitation to conversion. Their communities in the region contain a good proportion of North Africans—who were often only Muslims in a very distant sense—who have become Christians.... This priority which is given to announcing the Message rests on such texts as: "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life" which no Christian can challenge. But there is a risk of not respecting the people to whom one is speaking, of demonising their scriptures and going back to a war of religion.... Our choice is different.... We have to respect and love each other, recognising each other within our differences: indeed, a real recognition of these differences permits unity. We encourage each other to live our respective commitments and we believe in the commitment and faithfulness of God, who leads us to the truth in its entirety'.

Orientalism and Muslim identities. Secondly, where changes have occurred in theologies of dialogue, we can conclude that the social *ambience*, to which I have already referred, has not impeded these changes from occurring. Thirdly, there is a 'mirroring' of the dialectic of Orientalism and Muslim identities in that Christian and Muslim theologies of dialogue influence each other, and they have an influence on how the ordinary believer of one religion perceives the other religion. Fourthly, participants in dialogue have often got involved because of an interest in the theology of religions.

Religious exclusivism in Christianity and Islam is often based on Biblical and Qur'anic texts such as the following:

And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved (The Bible, Acts 4:12);

No one comes to the Father but by me (The Bible, John 14:6);

The Religion before Allah is Islam (submission to His will): nor did the People of the Book dissent therefrom except through envy of each other, after knowledge had come to them. But if any deny the Signs of Allah, Allah is swift in calling to account (The Qur'an, *Ali 'Imran* 3:19);

If anyone desires a religion other than Islam (submission to Allah), never will it be accepted of him; and in the Hereafter he will be in the ranks of those who have lost (all spiritual good) (The Qur'an, *Ali 'Imran* 3:85).¹⁵⁹

In the Roman Catholic tradition, magisterial dogmas such as '*extra ecclesia nulla salus*' (outside the church there is no salvation) have also been invoked. On the other

¹⁵⁹ See Wessels (1995) and Esack (1997) for a discussion of these verses.

hand, religious inclusivism, or dialogue, can also be supported by texts from the Bible and the Qur'an, for example:

And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd (The Bible, John 10:16);

Those who believe (in the Qur'an), and those who follow the Jewish (scriptures), and the Christians and the Sabians—any who believe in Allah and the Last Day, and work righteousness, shall have their reward with their Lord; on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve (The Qur'an, *Al Baqarah*, 2:62);

And nearest among them in love to the believers wilt thou find those who say, 'We are Christians': because amongst those are men devoted to learning and men who have renounced the world, and they are not arrogant (The Qur'an, *Al Ma'idah* 5: 82);

And argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious (The Qur'an, *Al Nahl* 16: 125).

Some writers, for example Jan Slomp (1992: 170), contrast the positivity of the Catholic church towards Islam with the 'rather negative remarks about Islam' made by the Protestant theologian Karl Barth. *Nostra Aetate*, the document on the relation of the Catholic church to 'non-Christian' religions, was one of the most revolutionary documents to come out of the *aggiornamento* of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), and formed the basis of subsequent Catholic teaching on this issue. As John Renard (1986: 69-70) points out: '*Nostra aetate*'s remarks about Islam seem quite reserved and polite in retrospect, but, given the prior history of Roman Catholic attitudes towards— or

simple inattentiveness to—Islam, the texts on Islam were quite remarkable and even revolutionary.’ The whole document is reproduced in the appendix, but there are some excerpts which are worth citing here. With respect to Muslims specifically, the document begins by expounding the common ground, and the reasons for holding ‘the Muslims’ and ‘the faith of Islam’ in high regard:

The Church regards with esteem also the Muslims. They adore the one God, living and subsisting in Himself, merciful and all-powerful, the Creator of heaven and earth, who has spoken to men; they take pains to submit wholeheartedly to even His inscrutable decrees, just as Abraham, with whom the faith of Islam takes great pleasure in linking itself, submitted to God. Though they do not acknowledge Jesus as God, they revere Him as a prophet. They also honour Mary, His virgin mother; at times they even call on her with devotion. In addition, they await the day of judgement when God will render their deserts to all those who have been raised up from the dead. Finally, they value the moral life and worship God especially through prayer, almsgiving and fasting.

Continuing from this, the document makes a plea to Muslims and Christians to improve their relations with each other, explicitly for the purpose of effecting social change and other benefits:

Since in the course of centuries not a few quarrels and hostilities have arisen between Christians and Muslims, this Sacred Synod urges all to forget the past and to work sincerely for mutual understanding and to preserve as well as to

promote together for the benefit of all mankind social justice and moral welfare,
as well as peace and freedom.

However, as Hans Küng (1978: 97-8) has pointed out, the Catholic church has not abandoned the doctrine of *extra ecclesia nulla salus*, merely reinterpreted it (though Küng insists that this is an unsustainable contradiction, and that *extra ecclesia nulla salus* must be abandoned). This reinterpretation is based on Karl Rahner's theology, which recognises the salvific potential of other religions, but which argues that this creates 'anonymous Christians', rather than any other religion being intrinsically valid.

Furthermore, in contrast to Slomp's juxtaposition of Catholic positivity and Protestant negativity towards Islam, Barth's theology has a more inclusivist and positive side. He recognises Melchizedek as one Biblical example of a 'foreign', 'pagan' religious leader with something vitally important to say, and with a constitutive role in the development of 'the revealed religion'.¹⁶⁰ In fact, this is a universalistic statement of Barth. Without mentioning Islam by name, he writes 'that man, our fellow-man generally, can become our neighbour, even where we do not think we see anything of the Church, i.e., in his humanity he can remind us of the humanity of the Son of God and show mercy upon us by summoning us in that way to the praise of God'. He continues in a long paragraph (not particularly long by Barth's standards, but long enough to be placed in the appendix) which explains both the Biblical basis and *ambiguity* of his theology of the world religions (Barth 1956: 425-6).

This ambiguity—by which individual 'Gentiles' were given a place, not only in 'redemptive history', but also in 'the apparently closed circle of the divine election', by which they had 'very important and decisive things to say to the children of the

¹⁶⁰ See Wessels (1995: 61). The Bible cites Melchizedek as 'the priest of God most high', and a prototype of Jesus Christ, despite his being a 'pagan' Canaanite priest.

household', but also by which they cannot 'be regarded as in any way the representatives of a general revelation', by which they 'have no Word of God to preach', 'are not witnesses of the resurrection' and 'have no full power to summon to the love of God'— is an accurate portrayal of the representations of Islam which can be found in different strands of Christianity. Although Barth was a Swiss Protestant theologian, he was reputedly regarded by Pope John XXIII as the 'Einstein' of twentieth-century theology, and, as we have seen, a similar ambiguity is present in the work of the Catholic theologian Rahner.

If we think of this discussion as mirroring the discussions of Western representations of Islam, in Part I of this thesis, then we should also consider Muslim theologies of dialogue as part of a dialectic which mirrors the dialectic of Orientalism and Muslim identities. I will do so briefly, as I continue on this theme in the conclusion to the thesis. Almost inevitably, the same ambiguity arises in Islam as in Christianity on the basis of Qur'anic texts such as the ones cited above, though the existence of specific Qur'anic injunctions on the subject of relations with the *Ahl al-Kitab* (the people of the book, particularly Christians and Jews) contrasts with the absence of Biblical references to Islam (which is not surprising, given the historical sequence of events). This may explain why Muslims who were involved in dialogue seemed more committed than Christians, though the Christians were present in greater numbers (if this impression is correct). Among commentators on the Qur'an, there has often been a belief that the 'inclusive' verses were 'abrogated' by the 'exclusive' ones. This was the view of Sayyid Qutb, one of the most influential writers of the twentieth-century Islamic resurgence, whose view is described by Issa Boullata (1995: 50) as follows:

The specificity and the distinctiveness of the Muslim community are very important matters in the thought system of Sayyid Qutb. To him, the teachings of the Qur'an divide humanity into Islam and Jahiliyya (pre-Islamic era), and there is nothing in between. According to him, since the Qur'an is God's last true message to humanity, other scriptural communities are subsumed under Islam. Their beliefs and practices are only validated by what the Qur'an teaches, not by what they claim their scriptures teach. Sayyid Qutb understands the implementation of the Shari'a of the Qur'an to be the hallmark of Muslim specificity and distinctiveness, and a dutiful acceptance of God's governance (*Hakimiyya*) over humanity, which he sees as the only governance that ensures justice, peace, and salvation. Thus, any religious pluralism that equates other religions with Islam tampers, in his view, with its specificity and distinctiveness and is unacceptable because it allows laxity in the full implementation of the Shari'a. To him, interfaith relations are possible only if the supremacy of Islam and that of its Shari'a are recognized; it would be best if all humankind would recognize Islam as their religion and its Shari'a as their law and way of life.

Although such a reading of the Qur'an is clearly negative in its view of inter-religious dialogue (except as a means of *dawa* or *jihad*), it does show how the reading of the text has an impact on practice. Farid Esack (1997: 163) completely disagrees with Qutb's reading on this issue (though he agrees on the importance of Qur'anic praxis), and with the specific application of *naskh* (abrogation). He writes:

Criticism of the abrogation theory, regarding God reneging on a promise or causing a past generation to suffer for the intransigence or disbelief of a present generation, is clear. Furthermore..., the supposedly abrogating text [*Ali 'Imran* 3:85, cited above] is no less inclusive than ... [*Al Baqarah* 2:62, also cited above], which is supposed to have been abrogated.... What is significant about this opinion is that Ibn 'Abbas and 'a group among the exegetes' actually held the opinion that this verse, at an earlier stage, did offer salvation to groups outside the community of Muslims. Ibn 'Abbas is one of the earliest commentators of the Qur'an. It was only much later, when the exegetes had recourse to more sophisticated exegetical devices, that alternatives to this theory became possible in order to secure exclusion from salvation for the Other.

From our point of view, however, what is important is not only the theological doctrines and diversities which exist, but also the way in which, and the extent to which, they influence the ordinary believer of either religion. This is the issue which has been discussed in the sections on the sociological and ethnographic routes, and it is here that all three routes merge.

9.5. Comparative evaluation

One way in which this can be considered is by adopting John Renard's five evaluative criteria, which were developed in order to evaluate a number of Vatican documents on Muslim-Christian dialogue. They are: establishment of the need for dialogue; educative value; stimulus to reflection; stimulus to action; and realism about

the possibilities of dialogue. We shall ask to what extent they are characteristic of dialogue in the United Kingdom and France.

The need for dialogue has been established in France by the challenge of *laïcité*, and to a significant extent in the United Kingdom by the effects of secularisation on issues like abortion or religious education. Social issues, such as discrimination against Muslims, and their economic status, have also been of concern for Christians, and dialogue has been seen as necessary if they are to confront such issues.

Dialogue in France has had an educative value, both as a result of discussion within the forums of dialogue, and as a result of the publicisation of dialogue through public lectures, participation in cultural events, and so on. In the United Kingdom, as I have suggested, dialogue tends to be more private, so it does not in itself have much of an educative impact on the wider society. Events like the interfaith pilgrimage do have educative value for participants, and academic dialogue, such as the Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations in Birmingham, has an educative impact on the academic literature, and, to a limited extent, on media discourse. However, according to Robert, Birmingham is about the most institutional example of dialogue in the United Kingdom, and its primary focus is not on dialogue in the United Kingdom context, but on international issues.

Of course, dialogue has an educative value for participants, and this is the case in both countries. Participants learn about each other, and each other's faiths, but they can also learn about their own. The example of different strands of Christianity learning about each other has been cited in this chapter. Another example, given by Robert, is of a Christian who was interested in Buddhism, wondered why there was no meditation in Christianity, then discovered that there was. In this way, participants' own faiths can become more relevant to them.

Stimulus to reflection is provided through dialogue in both countries, and has attained some prominence in the United Kingdom because of the public role of the church (for example, Prince Charles's desire to become the 'Defender of Faith', rather than 'Defender of *the* Faith'). As far as reflection by participants in dialogue is concerned, this is impossible to evaluate, though I was impressed with the reflection which was demonstrated by Ibrahim's comment (cited in Chapter 6) about the Qur'an being the Word of God written, Jesus Christ being the Word of God made flesh. This insight seems to have come from his education in Sufism, but to have been distilled through his participation in dialogue with Christians.

The only real example of stimulus to action that I have found emerging from Muslim-Christian dialogue was from the five resolutions on the equilibrium of society, cited in Guy Lepoutre's document, from the Hautmont group's weekend of 1989. Other than this, there is a danger of dialogue taking place in a 'safe' enclosed space, where people will deplore certain problems of society, but, having left the place of dialogue, will continue with 'life as normal'. This seems especially problematic in the United Kingdom, because informal and theoretical dialogue is, in these terms, particularly 'safe'.

On the other hand, realism about the possibilities of dialogue seems to have increased in both countries, because participants are more confident and willing to participate in dialogue without expecting to convert or to be converted. The emphasis of the Hautmont group on respect for differences seems to be the most realistic; some groups in the United Kingdom and France talk about the celebration of difference, which is more attractive than plausible. On this point I see no difference between the United Kingdom and France.

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9.6. Conclusion

Although it is not realistic to make a quasi-quantitative statement which makes a strictly comparative evaluation of dialogue in both countries, it is possible to point to certain qualitative differences, as I have done in this chapter. In a few words, as I wrote at the beginning of the chapter, dialogue in the United Kingdom is more theoretical, informal and multilateral, whereas dialogue in France is more practical, formal and bilateral. The conclusion we can draw from this chapter is somewhat paradoxical. On the one hand, the dynamics and significance of Muslim-Christian dialogue, particularly when viewed in the context of the dialectic of Orientalism and Muslim identities, are strongly influenced by the state polity of *laïcité* or establishment. On the other hand, there are many similarities in attitude and theology, and there is a greater diversity within each country than between them. This paradox can be resolved if we conclude, in keeping with the material which I have presented, that the differences between the United Kingdom and France are to do with the differing social and political contexts, and the degree and nature of secularisation, not theological views about dialogue, and that these contexts are also the contexts in which Muslim identities are constructed in response to Western Orientalist representations of Islam.

10. Conclusion

10.1. Addressing the hypotheses

This conclusion shows how the hypotheses of this work have been addressed, how the questions have been answered, what comparisons have been made, and it proposes directions for future research. This thesis has addressed three hypotheses: that Islam is perceived as homogeneous; that it is in fact diverse; and that there is a causal relationship between the perception and the reality. The perception of homogeneity has been constructed through centuries of Orientalist discourses, which perpetuated a stereotype of exoticism and then fanaticism. It has been constructed through Islamophobic discourses and practices, and through media stereotypes of exoticism, fanaticism and delinquency. These perceptions of homogeneity have been investigated in detail in Part I of this thesis, and the findings are expounded in section 10.2, below.

The diverse reality is investigated in Part II, particularly Chapter 6. There, it is shown that different mosques and organisations articulate diverse meanings of Islam, as do individuals. Islam can be articulated as a set of beliefs or practices, as an internal reality, as the property of a particular national or cultural group, as an identity which distinguishes the Muslim from the surrounding society, or as an identity which valorises the Muslim in all areas of his or her social life. Diversity exists in all these areas, and others. Chapters 7, 8 and 9 show that there is a diversity of attitudes towards national identities, the politics of integration or multiculturalism, education, the wearing of the

hijab (which also illustrates that there are different ways of reading the Qur'an), and people of other religions.

Each of these principles—that Islam is perceived in homogeneous terms, and that it is diverse—is well established, but there is original empirical evidence in this thesis, and there is a link between the two principles which is not so well established. It is the assertion of a causal relationship between the homogeneous perception and the diverse reality which is one of the original contributions of this thesis, identified in section 1.6, and this necessitates more in-depth corroboration. It is possible to begin this corroboration with reference to ideas in existing literature, but these ideas need to be synthesised and applied in an original way, and here they are combined with the empirical contributions of this thesis. There are five ways in which this corroboration can be achieved.

The first is Laroui's notion of complementarity. This has already been discussed at length in this thesis, but it is such a pivotal point that it is worth repeating the passage from *Islam et modernité* where Laroui explains the dynamic of complementarity in the history of relations between Islam and the West:

... le fait de complémentarité a présidé aux choix qu'ont fait au cours d'un millénaire Arabes et Européens dans des domaines aussi variés que la théologie (trinitarisme contre unitarisme), la métaphysique (immanence contre transcendance), l'esthétique (figuration contre abstraction), l'art militaire (infanterie contre cavalerie), l'architecture (maison ouverte contre maison fermée), urbanisme (rues orthogonales contre rues concentriques); je ne cite pas le costume, la toilette, la cuisine, la maintien que chacun peut encore détecter du premier coup d'œil.... A quoi est due cette différence...? Il me

semble que la raison profonde est un *a priori* qui fait partie de la conscience culturelle européenne. Si l'art occidental est évolution, développement, diversification, l'art musulman, par contraste méthodologique, doit être stabilité, répétition, monotonie (Laroui 1990: 156, 160).¹⁶¹

By extension, because the West is diverse, the Orient must be perceived as homogeneous, and Islam, being a part of the homogeneous Orient, must itself be perceived as homogeneous. Here it is the reality of the diversity of the West, rather than that of the diversity of Islam, which bears a causal relationship to the perception of Muslim homogeneity, but it establishes the principle that causal relationships can and do exist between perceptions of homogeneity and diverse realities.

The second corroboration enables us to bridge the remaining gap, and it is the application of the principle of negative dialectics to Orientalist representations and resistance to Orientalism through the construction of Muslim identities. There remains a perception that Muslim and Western values are radically incompatible, which is consolidated when Muslims are perceived as rejecting Western culture and values, or when 'assimilated' Muslims are perceived as having accepted the superiority of Western culture and values, or when a combined Muslim-Western identity is seen as contradictory and irrational. The negative dialectic means that Orientalism and resistance to Orientalism are in a situation of mutual antagonism, which makes them increasingly different and polarised. When this polarisation occurs, they are constituted in opposition

¹⁶¹ '... the dynamic of complementarity has presided over the choices which Arabs and Europeans have made for the past millennium, in domains as varied as theology (trinitarianism versus unitarianism), metaphysics (immanence versus transcendence), aesthetics (figuration versus abstraction), military strategies (infantry versus cavalry), architecture (the open house versus the closed house), urban planning (orthogonal streets versus concentric streets); I have not cited clothing, washing, or food, which everyone can detect immediately.... What is the cause of this difference...? It seems to me that, deep down, the reason is an *a priori* which is a part of European cultural consciousness. If Western art is evolution, development, diversification, Muslim art, by methodological contrast, must be stability, repetition, monotony'.

to each other, which means that, increasingly, they reinforce each other. They do this when Muslims and 'non-Muslim' Westerners look at each other, and define what is essential about their own identities, cultures and practices as what differentiates them from the Other. As a result, they seek new and different forms of expressing Orientalism and resistance to Orientalism, which also leads to a fragmentation of their discourses. For example, the West is increasingly distinguishing itself from the Islamic world on the basis of state judicial systems and respect for human rights, which is a different stereotype of Muslims from the one of the fundamentalist terrorist who works against, rather than through, the state. This fragmentation of discourses is a factor in the creation of diversity.

The third way of corroborating a causal relationship between the perception of homogeneity and the reality of diversity is to adapt Taguieff's vicious circle of racism and anti-racism. As I indicated in the introduction to this thesis, and in the chapter on Islamophobia (section 3.4), Taguieff's distinction between a *racisme hétérophobe* and a *racisme hétérophile* is reflected by a distinction between xenophobic and xenophile approaches to Orientalism, as Al-Azmeh (1996: 4, 28, 89) implies. According to Taguieff, there is a heterophobic racism, characterised by a hatred of the racially-defined Other, which is opposed by a heterophile antiracism, characterised by an appreciation of the Other. In reaction to this, a heterophile racism emerges, which also appreciates the Other—so much does it appreciate the Other that it seeks to maintain the Otherness of the Other and avoid any mixing between Self and Other. This is still racism. It, in turn, is opposed by a heterophobic antiracism which rejects the idea of difference in favour of universality (Taguieff 1987: 38 *et passim*), something which is particularly relevant to France because the assimilationist ideal is seen as a guarantee of universal equality and human rights within the French nation. Although there is a danger of this perspective

being adopted to justify an Islamophobic backlash against Muslims who insist on the specificity of their religion, culture and values, it does illustrate that the diversity of Orientalist discourses—which promotes the perception of Muslim homogeneity—produces a diversity of Muslim responses, and, by extension, of Muslim identities.

Since I have mentioned Al-Azmeh, the fourth corroboration is taken from his work. The point he makes is that some Muslims view Islam as homogeneous. There is ‘an objective complicity between exoticism and the rhetoric of identity and authenticity’ (Al-Azmeh 1996: 28), and this kind of rhetoric is propagated by some Muslims, particularly, in Al-Azmeh’s discourse, the ‘neo-Afghanists’. In other words, Muslims who insist that Islam should be believed and practised in a particular way, and who condemn or criticise the diversity which exists, are partly responsible for the perception of homogeneity which exists in Orientalist discourse. Furthermore, such Muslims exist because of the diversity of Islam. This is not to blame Muslims for the existence and substance of Orientalist representations of them, but I am also concerned not to reduce Muslims to the role of passive victims in the whole process, because this undermines their humanity as active agents who constitute their own essence.

Finally, I cite the empirical content of this thesis, which demonstrates that the diversity of Islam is actively constituted by Muslims, but that it is also brought about by circumstances, and that Muslim identities mediate active constitution and circumstances. For example, the identity which is implicit in an *Islam de France* demands a conscious decision to allow Islam to become more diverse, but this is only possible due to the circumstance of being in France. For another example, where one’s identity is influenced by migration, this mediates the activity of holding to a particular set of religious beliefs, or of changing one’s interpretation of those beliefs, and the material conditions of Muslim migration to Western Europe in the second half of the twentieth century.

Examples of this process include the different attitudes to Islam and Muslim culture which are present in different generations of Muslims in Western Europe, decisions regarding wearing of the *hijab*, and attitudes to inter-religious dialogue.

10.2. Answering the questions

At this point, it is possible to outline and expound the answers to the four central questions of this thesis. The questions were:

- (i) What perceptions exist of a West-Islam dualism, homogeneity of Islam, and homogeneity of the West?
- (ii) How are they expressed?
- (iii) What are their causes and effects?
- (iv) What dissenting voices exist, how are they expressed, and what are their causes and effects?

As we have looked at empirical case studies of Muslim identities in the United Kingdom and France, we have understood these questions in a more concrete way. At the end of Chapter 5, I summarised some preliminary answers to these questions, and other answers have been given throughout the thesis. I wish to expound these answers now.

In answer to the first question, I explained that these perceptions were found in newspaper articles, interviews with Muslim leaders and ordinary Muslims, academic material, and many other places. Indeed, Said (1995) has pointed to these perceptions existing as a comprehensive Western discourse, which in another context he describes as

'imperialist hegemony over the entire gamut of European culture' (Said 1992: 68), so it is not surprising that they are present in many different places.

What is more surprising, perhaps even paradoxical, is that the perception of homogeneity is articulated, or expressed, in different ways. By this I do not mean that it is expressed in different language, though, in answer to the second question, it is expressed in everyday language, in discourses aimed at a wider public, and in non-linguistic discourses and symbols. In answer to the first and second questions, the perception of homogeneity is expressed from very different perspectives. In the media material cited in Chapter 4, there were tangible perceptions of Islam as exotic (compared with an implicit normality of the West) or fanatical (compared with Western moderation and intellect). In this way, the perception of homogeneity has changed over time. However, there are different perceptions in the present day. Islam is perceived as foreign, the religion of the immigrant, which becomes a challenge for Western society. This is one reason why there is a perception of Muslims as inner-city delinquents, and it has been shown that their 'crimes' are often given more publicity than equivalent 'crimes' by 'non-Muslim', 'white', 'Western Europeans'. Islam is also perceived as foreign in that it is a political issue elsewhere, and this is connected with discourses of Muslim terrorism. Where such discourses are expressed, a strong connection is drawn between the religion and the terrorism, which is not done to the same extent in other cases (for example, it is not deduced from IRA operations that there is a strong connection between Catholicism and terrorism).

It may also be surprising that the perceptions referred to in the first question are sometimes articulated by Muslims themselves. In Chapter 3, a Muslim apologist was cited, who claimed that Islam was able to view Western civilisation 'from a height' which made it seem 'narrow and empty', with a glitter which was 'false and unreal' (Nadwi

1983: 20). As one would expect from a theologian or apologist, Muslims were defined according to a single *a priori* understanding of Islam, which he referred to as 'the Guidance and Message', and which excludes a conception of Islam as diverse. According to Al-Azmeh (1996), such discourse is implicit in the concepts of an authentic Muslim identity, which implies homogeneity and therefore excludes diversity, and of a cultural differentialism (an example of what I have called a West-Islam dualism) which creates 'a fetishism of the collective self as a socio-political imperative' (Al-Azmeh 1996: 7).

The causes and effects of such perceptions are found in history and in the present day. Historically, the causes are found in Orientalist and colonial discourses, the histories of Christianity and Islam, the crusades, post-war labour migration to Western Europe, and the elaboration of philosophies of integration, multiculturalism and *assimilation*. In the present day, the effects of these perceptions can be seen in the growth of Islamophobia, in debates about the *hijab*, and in other arenas. These effects impinge directly on the everyday lives of Muslims and 'non-Muslims' in the United Kingdom and France (and other countries), on the political situations of these countries, and on the questions of who and what people identify themselves with. Muslim identities and cultural differentialism may be causes of Al-Azmeh's 'fetishism of the collective self', but they are also effects of Orientalist discourses and of the historical interactions between Islam and the West. As I insisted in section 10.1, the diversity of Islam is actively constituted by Muslims, but it is also brought about by circumstances, and Muslim identities mediate active constitution and circumstances. They mediate because they are a cause as well as an effect, that is, they create perceptions as well as respond to them.

A negative understanding of this would be that Muslim identities are part of a vicious circle. This would undermine my claim, made in section 5.1, that a critique of Orientalism is not possible if we neglect or disparage Muslim identities. That is why the dissenting voices, referred to in the fourth question, are so important. These dissenting voices were found in the ideas of Esack, Rahman, Arkoun, Laroui and Al-Azmeh, and in echoes of their voices among the everyday actors of Islam in Western Europe, such as Jean, who believed that Islam and Christianity were compatible, and that the right to assimilate was more generous than the right to be different. Esack (1997), in particular, points the way forward with his insistence on a grounded pluralism, which includes a practical struggle for social justice, a basis for inter-religious dialogue, and an undermining of the West-Islam dualism. Such a dissenting voice can emanate from Muslims and 'non-Muslims'. It can emanate from Muslims who assert a Western identity as well as (but not instead of) a Muslim identity. It can emanate from Muslims who are critical of the West, but who recognise their own role as active agents in the West, or in the process of encounter between the West and Islam. It can emanate from a Muslim woman who declines to wear the *hijab*, without criticising those who do wear it. It can also emanate from a Western journalist who contributes to the critique of Islamophobia, and it can emanate from Muslims, Christians, people of all religions and people of no religion, when they enter into dialogue with one another.

10.3. Comparisons and contributions

In this conclusion, I have alluded to the contributions which are made by this thesis (these contributions are outlined in section 1.6, and discussed in some detail in the literature review in section 1.7). Most importantly, the dialectical relationship between

the diversity of Islam and the Orientalist stereotype of homogeneity is implicit in the argument, expressed above, that Muslim identities mediate the active constitution of diversity and the circumstances which create diversity—they do so by simultaneously *creating* perceptions of homogeneity, *responding* to perceptions of homogeneity, and *through* the dissenting voices which undermine the West-Islam dualism, struggle for social justice, and participate in inter-religious dialogue.

However, one contribution has not really been mentioned in this conclusion, and that is the fifth contribution, which emphasises the context of a direct British-French comparison. Indeed, this thesis has identified 33 contrasts between the United Kingdom and France, and these are summarised in Table 10.1. These should not be understood in an empiricist way, which is why many of the contrasts focus on perceptions and meanings rather than social facts. It should be emphasised that there are also similarities between the United Kingdom and France, such as a history of colonialism and migration, a degree of secularisation, discourses of racism and anti-Muslim sentiment, and some conflict. However, the purpose of this discussion is to elucidate the findings and contributions of this thesis in a more concrete way, and the use of empirical examples of contrast between the United Kingdom and France makes this possible. For the purposes of the following discussion, these points are grouped into five categories, *viz.* representations of the West, contextual representations of Islam, religious encounters, the diversity of Islam, and the signifiers of tension.

Firstly, the contrasting representations of the West which are found in the United Kingdom and France have constituted an important part of the context for the arguments which are contained in this thesis. In Chapters 1 and 7, it was argued that an ideal type distinction points to different models of the nation in the United Kingdom and France, although this was clearly distinguished from the realities of practice and impacts on the

Point of contrast	France	United Kingdom
Representations of the West		
Model of the state	Unitary nation state	'Multi-national' state
Philosophy of integration	<i>Assimilation</i>	Multiculturalism
Caricatured attitudes to integration	Wants people to integrate and appreciate French culture	Wants to avoid people trespassing and interrupting afternoon tea
Dominant paradigm	<i>Intégration</i>	Race relations
Contextual representations of Islam		
Islam in public discourses	Important	Less important
Consequences for research	Availability of data	Less availability of data
Main region or culture associated with Muslim migration	North Africa	South Asia
Discourse about Muslims and national cultures	Centrality of Algeria	Diversity of the Muslim world
Orientalist perspectives	Freudian domination of sexual symbols over Oriental society	Idleness explained by sensuality, explained by climate and religion
	<i>Mission civilisatrice</i>	Missionaries
	Colonial failure	Colonial success
	Cultural capital	Political and geographical power
	Culture explained religion	Religion explained culture
Religious encounters		
Characteristics of Muslim-Christian dialogue	Formal	Informal
	Practical	Theoretical
	Bilateral	Multilateral
	Open	Restricted
Awareness of need for dialogue	Strong	Weak
Relationship between dialogue and social action	Dialogue as stimulus to social action	Dialogue divorced from social action
Characteristics of Christianity	Catholic predominance	Multi-denominational
The religious and the secular	<i>Laïcité</i>	Established church
	Secularisation of political structure	Secularisation as a social process or change of <i>mentalités</i>
The diversity of Islam		
Basis of diversity in mosques	Attitudes to <i>intégration</i>	Languages
Perceived domination of mosques	Moroccan	Pakistani
The signifiers of tension		
Important perceived flashpoint	<i>Affaire du foulard</i>	Rushdie affair
Contentious issues in schools	<i>Laïcité</i> and the <i>hijab</i>	Muslim schools, RE, PE, sex education, <i>halal</i> food
Term for perceived Islamic extremism	<i>Intégrisme</i>	Fundamentalism
Representations of Islam	<i>Islamalgamé</i>	Islamophobia
Stereotypes of terrorism and delinquency	Amalgamated	Separated
Perceived approach to Islam	Closed, more difficult to be a Muslim	Open, easier to be a Muslim
Relationship with political racism	Extreme right demonisation of Muslims	Racism in political mainstream, focuses on a different Other
Perceived basis of racism	Skin colour	Behaviour
	Accent	Skin colour

Table 10.1: Contrasts between France and the United Kingdom

lives of Muslims. It was also argued that there is a logical progression from these models to different theories of integration. The existence of a multi-national state in the United Kingdom has meant that there has been a *de facto* multiculturalism for centuries, which goes some way towards explaining why the politics of multiculturalism seem to be more 'obviously' appropriate. In France, however, the process of nation building after the revolution of 1789 involved the construction of a unitary nation state, unitary in that it unites concepts such as nation, state, citizenship and language. Thus, the policy of assimilation is ingrained into the ethos of French republicanism, and so it has the appearance, to its supporters, of being more enlightened.

The specificities of interaction between France or the United Kingdom on the one hand, and Islam or Muslims on the other, cannot be situated solely in the historical development of the West. There has been a long history of interaction between the West and Islam, significantly through colonialism and post-war labour migration, and this history has taken different forms in the United Kingdom and France. This is why I draw a connection between the importance and character of Islam in public discourses, and the history of Orientalism and colonialism. The French combination of colonial failure and cultural capital led to a discourse in which culture explained religion. In other words, religion was the problematic to be explained, while culture was the explanation, so was not in need of any explanation itself. Thus, Islam *qua* religion has a more important place in public discourses in France than it does in the United Kingdom. In contrast, the United Kingdom's combination of colonial success with political and geographical power led to an opposite discourse, in which religion explained culture. Thus, culture was in need of explanation, rather than religion. So, Islam *qua* religion has a less important place in public discourse, while the multicultural model ensures an emphasis on the problematic of culture, or of Islam *qua* culture.

The third category, religious encounters, unites the issues of Muslim-Christian dialogue and the contextual elements of secularisation or *laïcité*. These are united in my analysis, and this is one of the contributions of the thesis. I refer to secularisation and *laïcité* as contextual elements because they constitute the context of debate, and are not issues, like the *affaire du foulard*, which have led to high-profile conflict. While the establishment status of the Church of England has always been contested, it is not an issue of significant conflict or even debate at the present time, so we can say that it is a contextual issue. As a result, secularisation has not had a significant impact on the political structure of the United Kingdom, while the juridical nature of French *laïcité* is a fundamental aspect of French republicanism, as it is understood by many people. *Laïcité* is not itself an issue of debate and controversy, it is the understanding, interpretation and expression of *laïcité* which is an issue. Some of these expressions constitute a reason for the differences in Muslim-Christian dialogue. *Laïcité* constitutes a common challenge to Muslims and Christians in France, so there is a strong awareness of the need for dialogue. This in turn affects the ethos of dialogue; there is a stronger organisation, which facilitates open, bilateral dialogue, but inevitably leads to a greater formality. On the other hand, the lower profile of secularisation in the United Kingdom weakens awareness of the need for dialogue, which necessitates a greater consideration of the theory of dialogue, and the inclusion of a plurality of religions. Because of the weak awareness of the need for inter-religious dialogue, it is surrounded by some taboos. As a result, it tends to be more restricted, which means that participants must be invited, or that meetings are not widely publicised, but also that informal dialogue, between neighbours, friends and colleagues, takes on a greater significance.

The diversity of Islam has already been discussed extensively in this conclusion, but there are two concrete points of contrast which are identified in Table 10.1. In France,

attitudes to *intégration* constitute the most manifest diversity between mosques, while in the United Kingdom, this role is filled by the diversity of languages. In France, the mosques are perceived to be dominated, or led, by Muslims of Moroccan origin (despite the greater number of Muslims of Algerian origin), while in the United Kingdom, the same perception exists about Muslims of Pakistani origin. These points further our understanding of the diversity of Islam, one of the contributions of the thesis. They are also relevant to a consideration of Muslim identities, as they illustrate the extent to which Islam can be conflated with nationality, so that someone who does not belong to the national group is not readily accepted as Muslim. Furthermore, it shows that Islam is diverse in the United Kingdom and France, and that this diversity frequently cuts across nation state boundaries.

Finally, the signifiers of tension, as I have called them, do not so much point to important structural differences between the United Kingdom and France, as to differences in how the underlying structure has manifested itself. For example, there are issues of contention between Muslims and the political society of both countries, but the issues which have come to prominence have been different. In France, it has been the *affaire du foulard*. In the United Kingdom, it has been the Rushdie affair. In both countries, contention has frequently arisen in the educational sphere. In France, this has been expressed in debate about *laïcité* and the *hijab*. In the United Kingdom, concern has been expressed on the issues of Muslim schools, the nature of religious education, mixed classes in physical education, the teaching of sex education, and the provision of *halal* food. In both countries, there is racism and religious prejudice. In France, this is expressed through the *Front National*, while a 'toned down' racism exists in the political mainstream of the United Kingdom, but, because it focuses on a different Other

(principally people of African-Caribbean origin), a different but overlapping discourse of Islamophobia has been identified.

10.4. Directions for future research

This leads conveniently to the possible directions for future which I wish to propose, since these include comparative research and focused investigation of Islamophobia. Such proposals must be made in the context of the available literature, not just this thesis. The literature review in section 1.7 identified certain 'gaps' which have been filled by this thesis, but other writers have of course addressed issues which I have not. So we must ask where this thesis should be situated within the available literature.

I have consciously situated this thesis at the points of contact between different sub-disciplines, theoretical concerns and fields of inquiry. It is situated at the meeting point between the sociology of religion and the sociology of migration, it combines theories of identity with the critique of Orientalism, it considers Muslim identities in the United Kingdom and in France, and it does so in tandem with the stereotypes of Islam which exist in these countries. In section 1.7, I suggested that the sociology of religion needed to take a more inter-disciplinary approach, as well as recognise the fact of religious change, and take account of the subjective realities of religion to the believer. This thesis has combined the sociology of religion with the sociology of migration, while drawing on anthropological approaches to the study of religion, and works of theology and religious studies which highlight the diversity of Islam. It is to be hoped that future research will seek out other disciplines and sub-disciplines which can be combined with the sociology of religion, so that the inter-disciplinary approach can be extended.

The sociology of migration is a particularly relevant area of contemporary sociology, because the discipline is having to grapple with the questions of globalisation. It is no longer possible for a sociologist to live in ignorance of what happens in other countries, as there is an interconnectedness and interdependency between nation states. This awareness has underpinned this thesis, which is why I have compared the United Kingdom and France within the context of the West as a whole. As I said in the literature review, there are very few genuinely comparative studies, but the ground has certainly been prepared for them (by, for example, Nielsen 1995b). So far, many of the works which are comparative (for example, Lapeyronnie 1993; Husbands 1995; Wieviorka, ed., 1997) have focused on the specific issue of the integration problematic, or a variation thereof. This thesis has made a broader comparison between the United Kingdom and France, but it is still a direct comparison, and it is to be hoped that future research will include comparative investigations of Muslims in these and other countries.

The critique of Orientalism has certainly not reached its conclusion, and it is to be hoped that future researchers will develop it further. I have pointed out, following Said, that Orientalism has been a comprehensive Western discourse, so there are plenty of possibilities for research. I have focused on Orientalism as it applies to media discourses, and articulations of Islamophobia. There is a need for further research in these areas, particularly Islamophobia, which so far has attracted very little analytical research. There is also a need for research into the effects of Orientalism and Islamophobia on other Western discourses, for example educational discourses, and for this research to be carried out in a wider comparative perspective.

In the review of literature in section 1.7, I expressed the view that the diversity of Islam is a rapidly growing area at the centre of studies of Islam. Works on theological differences and 'sectarian influences' (for example Robinson 1988; Andrews 1993b; King

1994; Geaves 1996) have been valuable, as have studies of conversion to Islam (for example Telhine 1991; Köse 1996; Bourque 1998). The studies of conversion to Islam should alert us to the fact that Islam is culturally as well as theologically diverse—it encompasses Western Europeans as well as people from predominantly Muslim countries. This thesis has drawn attention to a ‘diversity of diversity’, demonstrating that there is a diversity of Islamic theology, Muslim cultures, Muslim identities, national identities, religious experiences, attitudes to ‘non-Muslims’ and dialogue with other religions, political concerns and social circumstances. This list is by no means comprehensive, and further research may be able to further our understanding of this ‘diversity of diversity’ of Islam and Muslim identities, by discovering other items which can be added to the list, and examining them in depth.

To summarise, my proposals for future research are as follows. I propose that the sociology of religion take a more inter-disciplinary approach, seeking out other disciplines and sub-disciplines with which it can be combined. I propose that more international comparative research be carried out, recognising the interconnectedness of nation states in sociological analysis. I propose that the critique of Orientalism be developed further, particularly by investigating the diverse forums in which Orientalism and Islamophobia are articulated. I propose that these investigations should also include international comparative research. And finally, I propose that future research and reflection attempt to understand the different ways in which Islam and Muslim identities are diverse.

It must be emphasised that these are proposals, or suggestions, for sociological research on Islam and its relations with the West, and that the temptation to make predictions about future research, and future circumstances for research, must be avoided. Important events which have influenced Western perceptions of Islam, and, as

a result, Muslim identities, have been unpredictable. The Iranian revolution, the Rushdie affair, and the *affaire du foulard* were never predicted until they were on the verge of happening, and predictions which have been made have not yet happened. If I were to make one prediction, at least in the current sociological climate, it would be for a growth of inter-disciplinary research. However, even this prediction must be avoided. The same prediction was made in 1961, by more than one person (Watt 1961: ix; van Nicuwenhuijze 1961: 393), who suggested that Islamic studies and the sociology of Islam were converging, and that an inter-disciplinary approach to the study of Islam was a direction for the then immediate future. As Louis Althusser (1994: 279) put it, the future lasts a long time.

Appendices

Appendix 1. School document against the *hijab*

Esquisse d'argumentaire proposé à grands traits par le groupe de réflexion issu de l'assemblée de vendredi 27/09 à 17h30 (à propos du voile islamique ou *hidjab*).

(Cette contribution vise à respecter à la fois la clarté des principes de la République d'une part, et l'effort d'ouverture et de la persuasion d'autre part.

Elle n'ignore pas la difficulté d'être compris des élèves; ex.: ainsi pour la notion de laïcité.)

La demande du retrait du *hidjab* n'est pas un acte raciste et Le P...iste comme on a pu l'entendre. Cette interprétation (notamment à l'encontre de notre collègue J.T.) est un *contresens absolu*.

Elle n'est pas l'expression d'une volonté d'exclusion (paradoxe apparent à démontrer).

Elle manifeste au contraire une volonté d'intégration dans la communauté nationale (ou civique) sans distinction de sexe, de religion....

Demander le retrait du *hidjab* dans l'établissement *n'est pas exiger le renoncement aux convictions religieuses*: les élèves concernées conservent leur foi qui n'est pas mise en cause, qui est respectée; elles remettent le voile à la sortie du lycée si elles le désirent; le service public (et la laïcité) préserve la liberté de conscience.

Le voile n'est pas une obligation coranique, contrairement à ce qui a pu être dit. Rappelons qu'il n'apparaissait pas dans nos établissements il y a 10 ans.

Importance du geste à l'entrée du lycée (laisser les signes ostentatoires non adéquats): *l'établissement scolaire n'est pas un lieu comme un autre*; on n'y entre pas comme accède à une galerie marchande ou une place publique, il convient de respecter le lieu et sa fonction, de même qu'on ne pénètre pas sans égards dans une mosquée ou une église ou dans d'autres lieux particuliers.

(On peut d'ailleurs déplorer à nouveau le comportement de certains élèves dans les couloirs ou la cour du lycée! bis repetita...)

La République (et le service public) permet l'égalité de tous les citoyens; pour cela elle édicte des règles communes: la loi est la même pour tous; mais l'égalité ne signifie pas l'absence de diversité: *la coexistence est donc permise par le respect de ces règles*. La laïcité évite la loi d'un groupe ou d'une religion dominante et permet donc l'existence des autres.

L'école française n'est pas l'école du catholicisme, même si son calendrier est en relation avec certaines fêtes religieuses. La laïcité assure même une *protection* des convictions religieuses, elle est un rempart contre l'exclusion, le racisme (cf. actualité) et la persécution: en la mettant en cause on s'expose soi-même à ces dangers.

Le voile comme *discrimination* sexuelle (bien qu'il puisse être vécu comme valorisant par certaines filles): infériorisation et instrumentalisation par les hommes, négation de leurs prérogatives de citoyennes.

(Le voile comme discrimination religieuse: à l'égard de filles non voilées, à l'égard des non musulmans. Cependant le champ religieux demeure à la lisière de nos prérogatives). => voile comme outil d'*autoexclusion*.

La République ne peut permettre l'éclatement de la Nation en communautés assujetties à leurs propres lois, qu'elles soient religieuses, régionalistes voire nationalistes ou autres; ce processus aboutirait logiquement à l'intolérance, l'exclusion, la ghettoïsation, l'affrontement...

Les élèves concernées doivent éviter de considérer l'école comme hostile à leur confession. *Elles sont chez elles dans le service public*. Elles peuvent et doivent y entrer au même titre que les autres et contribuer à sa réussite.

Notre système d'enseignement n'est pas indifférent à la civilisation musulmane: il l'enseigne (ex.: retour dans les programmes d'histoire de 2°); il a conscience d'avoir hérité de l'esprit de tolérance manifesté par le monde musulman lorsqu'il était plus tolérant et plus «civilisé» que l'Occident chrétien; il bénéficie également de l'héritage culturel antique transmis et enrichi par ce même monde arabe à la même époque: connaissances scientifiques (mathématiques, anatomie...) philosophie etc...: certaines oeuvres gréco-romaines ont ainsi été sauvées de la disparition.

Le patrimoine culturel de la Nation s'est ainsi développé dans l'ouverture aux autres.

Appendix 2. School document against the *hijab*: translation

Sketched outline of argument suggested by the study group set up in response to the meeting of Friday 27 September at 5.30 p.m. (on the subject of the Islamic veil or *hijab*).

(This contribution aims to respect the clarity of the principles of the Republic on the one hand, and the effort of openness and persuasion on the other.

It is not unaware of the difficulty which some pupils will have in understanding it; e.g. the notion of *laïcité*.)

The request for the withdrawal of the *hijab* is not, as rumour has it, a racist and Lepenist act. That interpretation (with respect, notably, to our colleague J.T.) *completely contradicts its meaning*.

It does not express a desire to exclude (apparent paradox to be refuted).

On the contrary, it shows a desire for integration in the national (or civic) community, without distinction on the grounds of sex, religion....

Requesting that the *hijab* be removed within the establishment *does not mean demanding that religious convictions be renounced*: the pupils concerned keep their faith, which is not called into question, but respected; they put the veil back on as they leave school, if they so wish; the public sector (and the principle of *laïcité*) preserves freedom of conscience.

The veil is not a Qur'anic obligation, contrary to what may have been said. Remember that it was not seen in our schools ten years ago.

The importance of gestures at the school entrance (leaving inappropriate ostentatious signs behind): *the educational establishment is not a place like any other*; one does not enter it as one enters a shopping mall or a public square, it is important to respect the place and its function, just as one does not enter a mosque or a church or other special places without respect.

(Besides, once again we can deplore the behaviour of certain pupils in the school corridors or playground! to repeat once more....)

The Republic (and the public sector) facilitates the equality of all citizens; to that end it makes common laws: the law is the same for everyone; but equality does not entail the absence of diversity: *therefore, co-existence is made possible by respecting the rules*. *Laïcité* avoids the law of one dominant group or religion, and therefore enables others to exist.

French schools do not come under the aegis of Catholicism, even if their calendar is linked to certain religious festivals. *Laïcité* even ensures *protection* for religious beliefs, it is a bulwark against exclusion, racism (cf. current affairs) and persecution: in questioning it, one exposes oneself to these dangers.

The veil as sex *discrimination* (even though it gives some girls a feeling of value): inferiorisation and manipulation by men, negation of their prerogatives as citizens.

(The veil as religious discrimination: with respect to girls who are not veiled, with respect to non-Muslims. Yet the religious field remains on the edge of our prerogatives).
=> the veil as a tool of *self-exclusion*.

The Republic cannot allow the Nation to break up into communities subject to their own laws, whether they are religious, regionalist or even nationalist or otherwise; such a process leads logically to intolerance, exclusion, ghettoisation, confrontation....

The pupils concerned must avoid seeing the school as hostile to their confession. *They also are a part of the public sector.* They can and must enter on the same terms as the others and contribute to its success.

Our education system is not indifferent to Muslim civilisation: it teaches it (e.g. in the second year [for pupils aged approximately 16] history syllabus); it is aware of having inherited the spirit of tolerance displayed by the Muslim world when it was more tolerant and more 'civilised' than the Christian West; equally, it benefits from the classical cultural heritage transmitted and enriched by the same Arab world during the same period of history: scientific knowledge (mathematics, anatomy...), philosophy etc...: it is because of this that certain Greek and Roman works have been saved from disappearance.

The cultural heritage of the Nation has thus developed through an openness to others.

Appendix 3. Extract from fieldwork notes at the Halaqah circle in Glasgow

Friday 3rd November 1995

This was the first meeting of the Muslim study group that I have been to. On Thursday, I went to the Islamic book centre, which is at the Carrington Street mosque, and asked if there were any groups or courses which would enable me to learn about Islam. The man I spoke to, who was behind the counter, told me that there is a group which meets on Fridays at 7.00 p.m., to which 'non-Muslims' and 'new Muslims' also go, where everyone gets together and talks. I explained about my research, that I am studying Islam..., but that I want to ensure that what I say is fair. The man said that this would be fine....

The door was locked, and I had to buzz a few times before I got in. I thought this was a little bit strange for a religious building.... I was actually early, so was able to notice that the women turned up on time, to go to their separate group. One of them was Farida, a Turkish postgraduate student in mathematics who I have known for a couple of years. She was a bit surprised to see me there, so I explained in the few seconds we had that I was there to find out about Islam, but there seemed to be something inappropriate about a man and a woman having a conversation *inside* the mosque, so we didn't really get to talk. The women went downstairs into the basement..., while the men went upstairs for the 'English speaking circle'. There was also an Arabic speaking circle for men..., at the same time and in another part of the mosque....

I met a man by the name of Ali, who showed me to the room where the meeting was to be. He seemed to be one of the group leaders, and told me what they would be doing. The men, he noted, were lazier than the women, and usually arrived later. We discussed a bit about Islam and the Qur'an—he gave me some helpful hints about reading the Qur'an. Others gradually arrived, and we talked a bit. People were interested in what I was doing, and were very welcoming.

The study was from Surah 25, verses 61-77 (*Al-Furqan*, 'The Criterion'). Nearly everyone who was there read the text, those who could in Arabic (some in a very musical way), others in English. So we read the text, I would think, about ten to fifteen times. A few people were jotting down notes, often in Arabic (a number of the people there had Arabic as their first language—some were from Egypt, one from Saudi Arabia) and on

the back of an envelope. I *had* thought that Muslims had an extremely reverential attitude towards the physical book itself, but they were shelved like ordinary books and people often used them as something to lean on while taking notes. After the fifth reading, some went downstairs to join 'the brothers' for the prayer, while others, who had already done so or who were non-Muslims, stayed upstairs. We chatted again for a few minutes, then the readings continued.

Akbar was responsible for leading, so he made a number of points about the text. Some of the points he made had great religious significance for the Muslims who were there.... For example, the day is for working and for enjoying the daylight which is a gift of Allah, and the night is for resting (verses 61-2). On the other hand, the prayers which are said in the mosque are only an external part of Islam—the 'real Islam' is what is done in private, when Muslims can take their time over their prayers or say them quickly to get them out of the way, and at night, when those 'who spend the night in adoration of their Lord, prostrate and standing..., say: "Our Lord! Avert us from the wrath of hell, for its wrath is indeed an affliction grievous"' (verses 64-5). One of the best things that one can do in this life is to find a good wife, one who will keep her husband on the paths of Islam (verse 74). One point which Akbar made, which was picked up on afterwards by a few people was from verses 63 and 68: 'And the servants of (Allah) most Gracious are those who walk on the earth in humility, and when the ignorant address them, they say, "Peace"..., nor slay such life as Allah has made sacred, except for just cause'. Peter, one of the non-Muslims who was there compared this to the attitudes of some of the 'fundamentalists' who kill in the name of Islam, and others remarked that there are Muslims who do not understand this verse—even to take the life of an animal unlawfully, or to commit suicide, is against the principles of Islam, which prescribes tolerance even towards those who are intolerant of the Muslim's point of view....

Afterwards, there was tea, cakes and peanuts, and a time for everyone to introduce themselves (and for me to explain what I was doing to the whole group). A few people had come from a distance, for example Aziz from Dumfries and someone else from Stranraer. A lot of people were from, or their parents were from, Pakistan, Kashmir or Egypt, with others from Saudi Arabia, Libya, Scotland and England. People began to talk individually over tea—one man [Yusuf] who was particularly anxious to make me feel welcome started explaining more about the Qur'an to me, that it was important to read it in the 'first person' (what does it say to me?), how he had done that and become a Muslim three years ago, though he did the prayers before, and how important it was to

search for the truth, which was to be found in the Qur'an (he said this pointing to the Arabic script). He believed that that was the reason for my being there—it was part of my own subconscious search for truth which leads people to the Qur'an. I must admit that this made me a bit uncomfortable—Ali told him to take things more gradually—but it shows that there is an openness there....

Before leaving, I had a chance to speak briefly with a man who I assume was a Scottish convert to Islam [Andrew], who left with a white woman who was wearing a headscarf, though I know that he is unmarried. I also spoke to Malik, who had been at the group for a few months, and who was very enthusiastic: 'It's the truth, know what I mean?', he said....

Friday 10th November 1995

After the Qur'an recitation, while most people were downstairs praying, I asked Akbar a few questions.... He had already prayed in the mosque before coming, which was why he did not join everyone else. I wondered why people were praying at different times, as I thought the five daily prayers were all at specified times. He told me that this is the case for the first four, but the fifth can be from any time between sunset and midnight....

I asked Akbar about the different mosques, remarking that I was a bit confused by all the different names, like Bareilwi, Deobandi etc. He said that there is not such a big difference—any Muslim can, in theory, pray in any mosque, though some (the Shi'as in particular) effectively reserve their mosques for the members of their own 'sects' (this was the word he used). I also asked about the Arabic Qur'an recitations, why some of them, when reading, almost seemed to be singing. He said that there is a proper way of reciting the Qur'an, which involves the use of certain tones, but it is not supposed to involve singing. For example, in the time of Muhammad, *Allah-u akhbar* was pronounced with an elongation of the 'al' sound, and a rise in tone for the 'bar' sound; now, it is often sung by the *muezzins* from the minarets (as seen on television), but this is not correct.

[When I arrived] I was left to find my own way upstairs, and forgot to take my shoes off until half way up the stairs. I quickly went downstairs again and took them off before anyone saw me. Again, I was greeted very warmly with everyone saying '*al-salaam alaikum*'. On the way upstairs, I passed a woman who had been on the

telephone. She was wearing a headscarf, and I noticed her looking away from me and standing out of the way as we passed. It would be unfair to say that women in Islam are more subordinate in Islam than in other social groups, but the form of subordination of women in Islam seems to be highly specific, putting a great deal of emphasis on symbols.

The study this week was from Surah 26, verses 1-9 (*Ash-Shu'ara*, 'The Poets'), and Tariq was leading. I will repeat a couple of the points which he made. First, verse 1 is simply the Arabic letters *Ta, Sin, Mim*. Tariq was anxious to point out that this surah, as many others, begins with such letters, and that, although there are many interpretations of them, it is generally agreed that only Allah knows their meaning.... Second, verses 6-8: 'They have indeed rejected (the Message): so they will know soon (enough) the truth of what they mocked at! Do they not look at the earth—how many noble things of all kinds We have produced therein? Verily, in this is a Sign: but most of them do not believe.' These verses, as expounded by Tariq, showed the conviction of the Muslims there, they believe that Islam is the Truth, and that the natural world proves this....

Over tea, I chatted with a few people, some of them offering to lend me books which would help me with my research. One of them was Malik, who told me about his job, his pilgrimage to Mecca, about the Christians he had met. Yusuf was busy trying to convert me again, but this gave me the chance to ask more questions....

Friday 24th November

I met a couple of new (to me) people this evening. One was Edward, a fairly old Scotsman who was obviously a convert to Islam, though I think he must have been a Muslim for some time. He is clearly quite eccentric—he has a long grey beard, a similar colour of teeth, and he lives with his cats. He always seemed to have something to say, not always serious, much to the exasperation of Ali. While others were downstairs for the prayer, we spoke a bit. He seemed to find it quite funny that I should consider Muslims a social group, which was clearly the case since I am a sociologist studying Muslims. He pointed out with great delight that Muslims were terrible timekeepers. How they ever managed to travel the world, he said, he would never know....

Aziz was leading ... part of the programme, and he talked about the *Hadith*, how it was compiled, and its authoritative role in the constitution of Islam. He was anxious to show that the four thousand authoritative *Hadith* were genuine representations of the Prophet, his teaching and his life.... This was a reduction from some two hundred

thousand, so only the most sure ones were accepted, according to the criteria of harmony with the Qur'an and the trustworthiness of those who transmitted them (which had to be of an extremely high standard, much higher than that which is regarded as necessary for a Muslim).

This sparked off quite a controversy between those who saw the *Hadith* as a necessary foundation of Islam, alongside the Qur'an, and those, like Andrew, who saw the Qur'an as being 'entire and complete'—the *Hadith* being no more than a useful historical window on the life of the Prophet. This subject comprised much of the small group discussions over tea and cakes afterwards, and provided a useful insight into this area of disagreement between Muslims. Yet they seemed able to disagree in a friendly, though no less fervent, way.

Friday 1st December

I arrived this evening with Peter, the Christian and architect who has been going along to find out more about Islam. He has told me that he is concerned about the situation in Bosnia, and that was the major catalyst which got him interested in Islam. We were the first ones there, even though we were one or two minutes late. So much for Yusuf's theory that Muslims should be the best time keepers in the world, we said. Edward's theory seemed to have more bearing on reality...

Aziz continued his discussion of the *Hadith* from last week, this time looking at the night journey of Muhammad to the 'far mosque' in Jerusalem. This miracle was not an attraction, but a test for the faithful, since there had been no witnesses of this night journey to Jerusalem and back except Muhammad himself and the Archbishop of Jerusalem, who was the guardian of this mosque and had purposefully left the door open for the expected prophet to enter. Some people tried to use this story to discredit Muhammad, and, to an extent, they succeeded, since some of the Muslims converted away from Islam at this time. But those who were left were the real faithful, even though this alleged miracle was not to be a tenet of faith for the Muslims, to believe in it was not obligatory.

Part of this talk concerned the reduction in the number of prayers from fifty to five. [†]According to this story, when Moses was given his mission by God, the number of prayers to be performed each day was set at fifty, but Moses pointed out that this was unrealistic and managed to get it reduced, a bit at a time, to five. He could have gone

lower, but felt too ashamed to do so. So the number of prayers was (and is) set at five as a duty, fifty for reward, but to someone who does five prayers, it will be credited to him as fifty. I pointed out that this seemed contrary to the spirit of Islam: isn't Islam supposed to be about submission to God rather than bargaining with God? A lively discussion ensued, some people argued that there was no question of bargaining here, since fifty was still the standard; others said that bargaining with God was perfectly consistent with the spirit of Islam, since it was recognising Allah as merciful. [Aziz told me that he had wondered about this as well.]

The issue of the holy land and Jerusalem kept coming up. Ali pointed out that it was controlled by Canaanite tribes, then the Jews..., then the 'Romans/Christians', then the Muslims. 'Now it looks as if the Muslims have lost it again, maybe they sinned or something', he said.

Afterwards, I chatted with Aziz and Selwyn. I talked to Aziz about his travels: he was born in Egypt, trained as an anaesthetist, married an Irish woman who was working in Egypt, went to live in Ireland..., then Saudi Arabia and Britain. He lived in London before he lived in Dumfries (where he is now), and while we were talking about languages (Arabic, English, French), he told me a story about his arrival in London and problem with the word 'toilet'. Coming from Egypt, he pronounced it more like the French '*toilettes*' (Egypt was under French as well as British colonial rule). Selwyn told me about his conversion to Islam three years ago, his Christian upbringing and problems with the doctrines of the trinity and the deity of Christ, so he was attracted by the Qur'anic references to 'Jesus, son of Mary'. Becoming a Muslim has led to change in his lifestyle, but he considers himself much like anyone else except for not going out to the pub on Friday evenings, which he doesn't really miss anyway, and he has problems with boss at work because of his (sometimes 'vulgar') humour.

Friday 15th December

Malik gave me a book this evening, entitled *The Choice* [by Ahmed Deedat], which was about Christianity and Islam, using some of the prophecies in the Old Testament to prove that Muhammad was the one who was to come, the greatest of the prophets, even the Paraclete. Malik said that it was very good, though Ali said that it was quite a combative book. It is well written, but there are some places where its demolition of Christianity is based on very tenuous interpretations of the biblical texts and the beliefs of

Christians. But it provides some insights into the conviction of Muslims that Islam is the truth, and that this claim is backed up by pre-Qur'anic evidence from God's other books, as well as from history and nature....

The special topic was on the subject of *jihad* in Islam. I suppose there were three main points here. First, that *jihad* is not identical to war, or holy war—it also means effort to defend and propagate Islam. Second, *jihad* does sometimes involve military action. Third, *jihad*, in whatever form necessary, is the duty of Muslims, and to neglect it is to invite trouble. Though it was pointed out a few times that *jihad* is not identical to war, it was the military aspect that was at the centre of discussion. No civilisation has been achieved without war, to hope for a peaceful world is naïve. *jihad* is neither war nor peace, but *jihad*. Muslims have a duty to defend each other, but the fact they do not shows they are not one *ummah*. Otherwise Bosnian Muslims would be able to count on the (military) support of other Muslims in nearby countries, like Turkey. These are some of the things that were pointed out.

Once more, the history of Islam came into the discussion. Not only is it necessary to do *jihad* for the right reasons, it is also necessary to do it in the right way. During the crusades, the Christian armies took Jerusalem with a great deal of slaughter, of men, women and children. The Muslim armies killed only a few. At the time of Muhammad, the Muslims would send ultimatums to other states: they could either accept Islam, allow Muslim preachers to come and tell them about Islam, or war. In one case, war went ahead without the other state being given this choice, and when this was drawn to Muhammad's attention, he ordered his army to withdraw, and then gave them the choice. They accepted Islam because they were amazed at this code, and wanted to follow the same religion. When the Muslim heartlands were invaded by other powers, the invaders often ended up turning to Islam, and this is (allegedly) a case unique in history. They often tell these stories to encourage one another....

Friday 12th January 1996

We were still on Surah 26, though we are reaching the end, and verses 176-191.... There was a bit of a discussion about the importance of the historical details in the interpretation of the Qur'anic passage. The man who was leading said that it was not appropriate to go into detail where this was not germane to the argument of the surah, but another (older) man there [Wasim] said that this could make the Qur'an very dry,

quoting the words from the passage (verse 181): 'Give just measure, and cause no loss (to others by fraud)'. Most people laughed at this.

Another interesting point [Wasim] made was that he was talking to his 'Christian friends', and they said that it was the worst people who went to church, so they didn't, and they wanted to know if it was the same in the mosque. His answer was that they should go to church, since the attitudes of other people was irrelevant—what mattered was their own obedience to Allah, as they understood it....

Afterwards, I had a good chat with Mustapha, from Mauritius, whose first language is French (though we talked in English), and who has lived in Grenoble as well. He actually lives in Birmingham just now, but he is in Glasgow for a few months working with Ali (who is an engineer). We discussed a lot of the differences between the situations of Muslims in Britain and France. We agreed on the significance of the *assimilation/multiculturalism* distinction, though he thought that the British approach was much more open, while I argued that there was a danger of a kind of segregation between the different communities in such a situation. Interestingly, he thought that I may come to discover that, looking at how Muslims 'fit in' to Western society....

Friday 19th January

I arrived late this evening, while everyone was downstairs praying. Once we got restarted, Ali did the *tafseer*, standing in for someone else. Then Akbar gave a talk about Ramadhan. I notice that his speech is littered with various Arabic expressions, particularly *insh'Allah*. 'We are approaching, *insh'Allah*, a great month', he began. I found out a few things about Ramadhan which I hadn't known: it was the month when the Qur'an was revealed to Muhammad, and it was the month of one of the major battles between the Muslims and the pagan tribes. The fast of Ramadhan was instituted while Muhammad was in Medina, I think it was the twelfth year of the *Hijra*.

Peter said that he wanted to do the fast 'as a Muslim, even though I'm not a Muslim'. The response to this was not particularly favourable. Akbar and Ali were both insistent that the fast had to be done with the right motivation, otherwise there could be no reward, and if it was done by a non-Muslim who did not believe the *shahada* and 'follow the Qur'an, it would not be acceptable to Allah at all. But Peter didn't seem to want to take no for an answer....

Friday 23rd February 1996

The actual Halaqah was cancelled tonight. Ali and a few others stayed upstairs to plan for the Eid celebration at Shawlands Academy on Sunday. The rest of us went downstairs for a leaving party for a Bosnian Muslim [Alija] who was leaving to go back to Bosnia. We had some rice and a Pakistani curry-like dish, although it seemed to me that there was more bone than meat. One man made a short speech, wishing him well and saying that they would visit him *insh'Allah* in Bosnia. He suggested that he should convert the other peoples in Bosnia to Islam, then there would be no problems—the response was: ‘They are bad people, I don’t want them to become Muslim.’

I chatted for a while with Yusuf, who I hadn’t had a conversation with for a while. He was trying to persuade me that Islam made everything in life secure and satisfying, that it made it possible to control one’s life. I chatted a bit with Akbar as well, and found out that he is the Imam for students at Strathclyde University. He said I should come and find him sometime, look at the Islamic books there, and come for the Friday prayer so that I can listen to the talk...

[Note: People’s names in this appendix have been changed to the pseudonyms in Table 1.2.]

Appendix 4. Extract from fieldwork notes at the *Groupe Islamo-Chrétien*

27.09.96 Tonight's meeting of the *Groupe Islamo-Chrétien* was the first after a summer break. Of course, it was the first for me, so I arrived not knowing anybody (except for Guy Lepoutre). People shook hands, then the meeting began with some introductions—of people who weren't generally known, including me. During this time, the subject of Algeria came up, due to one Catholic priest who had been there for ten years, and the assassination of the Bishop of Oran. One Muslim woman had been in the *quartier* when it happened, so hadn't heard any details (ironically), but was able to testify that the town stood still for the funeral.

One member who had died was mentioned, and some matters arising. They have been searching for Muslim *responsables* in France, and haven't got very far. Having said that, I spoke to Pierre afterwards, who is involved in *Médi@tions* (sic), and he told me about the emergence of a Council of Mosques in Dunkirk. He saw this as a *dialogue interislamique*, because it was bringing the mosques of different nationalities (Tunisian, Algerian, Moroccan, West African, Turkish) together.

Then, it was mentioned that the Muslims in the north of France had warmly welcomed John Paul II (who visited France this week and last), and they had sent a donation of 2,000 French francs towards the cost of the visit.

The situation in Palestine came up (fighting began in the last couple of days after the Israelis opened a tunnel under the Dome of the Rock); Muslims and Christians alike felt that the Israelis had pushed things to the limit, and it was surprising that there hadn't been a reaction before.

The meeting at Assisi, of the Pope and other religious leaders, was mentioned in connection with an inter-religious event on 27 October, involving support for the *sans papiers* in Lille who used the hall for a base, with each religion present carrying out their own prayers. This will be in a Protestant-owned hall (the *Salle de la solidarité*).

An Iranian film which is on was advertised.

Then they talked about the theme for the weekend conference next year (22-23 March 1997). Seven subjects were discussed, each of which gave rise to some discussion.

1. The first was '*Deux grandes fêtes*', which would involve looking at *Eid ul-Fitr*, *Eid ul-Adha*, Christmas and Easter. The religious and spiritual meanings, as well as the practices and problems in practising (e.g. the sacrifice of *Eid ul-Adha*) were issues which

people talked about. The question of whether Christmas really has a religious meaning for many people also arose. Most people thought this could be a good subject, though some people thought later that it was less important than some urgent political issues, others that it could be combined with some other topics.

2. '*Dignité de l'être humain*' seemed quite heavy at first, but it was linked with some political issues, for example the *sans papiers* who seem to be denied their dignity. Others thought this was ground they had already covered.

3. '*De l'immigration à l'intégration*' was very unpopular, because Pierre and some Muslims felt this was a *sujet passé*: Muslims are already French and therefore not in need of integration, was the line which seemed to meet with general approval.

4. '*La prière dans nos traditions*' was generally popular and uncontroversial, I think.

5. '*Dialoguer*' was an interesting one. Some thought we should ask: why dialogue? Others felt this was something which had to be lived and wasn't for theoretical discussion. One Muslim man pointed out that it's only a minority who dialogue, as evidenced by the numbers present (about 20).

6. '*Sens de la mort*' was proposed by Aïsha (a Muslim woman), and she had proposed it before. She meant not only issues of the afterlife (someone noted Protestant-Catholic *nuances* on this subject), but also practicalities of burial, hospital treatment etc. The Muslim man mentioned above insisted that this could be combined with *fêtes* because death marked the passing from one life to another and could be celebrated with music. Other Muslims were less sure. Guy Lepoutre wanted to know if *espérance* had a meaning for Muslims, but the Muslims were not too sure.

7. Finally, '*accueil de l'étranger*', which became '*accueil de l'autre*': the importance of the notion of welcome in Christianity was evoked, and the question of how it applied to Muslims was discussed. Muslims said that it was not so important *qua* concept in Islam, just something that is done. Aïsha said 'it's just natural for us'. The choice of *étranger* or *autre* produced some argument.

[Note: People's names in this appendix have been changed to the pseudonyms in Table 1.1.]

Appendix 5. *Nostra Aetate*

Paul, Bishop

Servant of the Servants of God together with the Fathers of the Sacred for everlasting memory

[*Nostra Aetate*]

Declaration on the relation of the Church to non-Christian religions

In our time, when day by day mankind is being drawn closer together, and the ties between different peoples are becoming stronger, the Church examines more closely her relationship to non-Christian religions. In her tasks of promoting unity and love among men, indeed among nations, she considers above all in this declaration what men have in common and what draws them to fellowship.

One is the community of all peoples, one their origin, for God made the whole human race to live over the face of the earth (1). One also is their final goal, God. His providence, His manifestations of goodness, His saving design extend to all men (2), until that time when the elect will be united in the Holy City, the city ablaze with the glory of God, where the nations will walk in His light (3).

Men expect from the various religions answers to the unsolved riddles of the human condition, which today, even as in former times, deeply stir the hearts of men: What is man? What is the meaning, the aim of our life? What is moral good, what sin? Whence suffering and what purpose does it serve? Which is the road to true happiness? What are death, judgement and retribution after death? What, finally is the ultimate inexpressible mystery which encompasses our existence: whence do we come, and where are we going?

2. From ancient times down to the present, there is found among various peoples a certain perception of that hidden power which hovers over the course of things and over the events of human history; at times some indeed have come to the recognition of a Supreme Being, or even of a Father. This perception and recognition penetrates their lives with a profound religious sense.

Religions, however, that are bound up with an advanced culture have struggled to answer the same questions by means of more refined concepts and a more developed language. Thus in Hinduism, men contemplate the divine mystery and express it through an inexhaustible abundance of myths and through searching philosophical inquiry. They

seek freedom from the anguish of our human condition either through ascetic practices or profound meditation or a flight to God with love and trust. Again, Buddhism, in its various forms, realises the radical insufficiency of this changeable world; it teaches a way by which men, in a devout and confident spirit, may be able either to acquire the state of perfect liberation, or attain, by their own efforts or through higher help, supreme illumination. Likewise, other religions found everywhere try to counter the restlessness of the human heart, each in its own manner, by proposing 'ways', comprising teachings, rules of life, and sacred rites.

The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions. She regards with sincere reverence those ways of conduct and of life, those precepts and teachings which, though differing in many aspects from the ones she holds and sets forth, nonetheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men. Indeed, she proclaims, and ever must proclaim Christ, 'the way the truth, and the life' (John 14: 6), in whom men may find the fullness of religious life, in whom God has reconciled all things to Himself (4).

The Church therefore, exhorts her sons, that through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions, carried out with prudence and love and in witness to the Christian faith and life, they recognise, preserve and promote the good things, spiritual and moral, as well as the socio-cultural values found among these men.

3. The Church regards with esteem also the Muslims. They adore the one God, living and subsisting in Himself, merciful and all-powerful, the Creator of heaven and earth (5), who has spoken to men; they take pains to submit wholeheartedly to even His inscrutable decrees, just as Abraham, with whom the faith of Islam takes great pleasure in linking itself, submitted to God. Though they do not acknowledge Jesus as God, they revere Him as a prophet. They also honour Mary, His virgin mother; at times they even call on her with devotion. In addition, they await the day of judgement when God will render their deserts to all those who have been raised up from the dead. Finally, they value the moral life and worship God especially through prayer, almsgiving and fasting.

Since in the course of centuries not a few quarrels and hostilities have arisen between Christians and Muslims, this Sacred Synod urges all to forget the past and to work sincerely for mutual understanding and to preserve as well as to promote together for the benefit of all mankind social justice and moral welfare, as well as peace and freedom.

4. As the Sacred Synod searches into the mystery of the Church, it remembers the bond that spiritually ties the people of the New Covenant to Abraham's stock.

Thus the Church of Christ acknowledges that, according to God's saving design, the beginnings of her faith and her election are found already among the Patriarchs, Moses and the prophets. She professes that all who believe in Christ—Abraham's sons according to faith (6)—are included in the same Patriarch's call, and likewise that the salvation of the Church is mysteriously foreshadowed by the chosen people's exodus from the land of bondage. The Church, therefore, cannot forget that she received the revelation of the Old Testament through the people with whom God in His inexpressible mercy concluded the Ancient Covenant. Nor can she forget that she draws sustenance from the root of that well-cultivated olive tree onto which have been grafted the wild shoots, the Gentiles (7). Indeed, the Church believes that by His cross Christ Our Peace reconciled Jews and Gentiles, making both one in Himself (8).

The Church keeps ever in mind the words of the Apostle about his kinsmen: 'There is the sonship and the glory and the covenants and the law and the worship and the promises; theirs are the fathers and from them is the Christ according to the flesh' (Romans 8: 4-5), the Son of the Virgin Mary. She also recalls that the Apostles, the Church's main-stay and pillars, as well as most of the early disciples who proclaimed Christ's Gospel to the world, sprang from the Jewish people.

As Holy Scripture testifies, Jerusalem did not recognise the time of her visitation (9), nor did the Jews, in large number, accept the Gospel; indeed not a few opposed its spreading (10). Nevertheless God holds the Jews most dear for the sake of their Fathers; He does not repent of the gifts He makes or of the calls He issues—such is the witness of the Apostle (11). In company with the Prophets and the same Apostle, the Church awaits that day, known to God alone, on which all peoples will address the Lord in a single voice and 'serve him shoulder to shoulder' (Sophonias 3: 9) (12).

Since the spiritual patrimony common to Christians and Jews is thus so great, this Sacred Synod wants to foster and recommend that mutual understanding and respect which is the fruit, above all, of biblical and theological studies as well as fraternal dialogues.

True, the Jewish authorities and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ (13); still, what happened in His passion cannot be charged against all the Jews, without distinction, then alive, nor against the Jews of today. Although the Church is the new People of God, the Jews should not be presented as rejected or accursed by God, as

if this followed from the Holy Scriptures. All should see to it, then, that in catechetical work or in the preaching of the Word of God they do not teach anything that does not conform to the truth of the Gospel and the spirit of Christ.

Furthermore, in her rejection of every persecution against any man, the Church, mindful of the patrimony she shares with the Jews and moved not by political reasons but by the Gospel's spiritual love, decries hatred, persecutions, displays of anti-Semitism, directed against Jews at any time and by anyone.

Besides, as the Church has always held and holds now, Christ underwent His passion and death freely, because of the sins of men and out of infinite love, in order that all may reach salvation. It is, therefore, the burden of the Church's preaching to proclaim the cross of Christ as the sign of God's all-embracing love and as the fountain from which every grace flows.

5. We cannot truly call on God, the Father of all, if we refuse to treat in a brotherly way any man, created as he is in the image of God. Man's relation to God the Father and his relation to men his brothers are so linked together that Scripture says: 'He who does not love does not know God' (1 John 4: 8).

No foundation therefore remains for any theory or practice that leads to discrimination between man and the man or people and people, so far as their human dignity and the rights flowing from it are concerned.

The Church reproves, as foreign to the mind of Christ, any discrimination against men or harassment of them because of their race, colour, condition of life, or religion. On the contrary, following in the footsteps of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, this Sacred Synod ardently implores the Christian faithful to 'maintain good fellowship among the nations' (1 Peter 2: 12), and, if possible to live for their part in peace with all men (14), so that they may truly be sons of the Father who is in heaven (15).

The entire text and all the individual elements which have been set forth in this Declaration have pleased the Fathers. And by the Apostolic power conferred on us by Christ, we, together with the Venerable Fathers, in the Holy Spirit, approve, decree and enact them; and we order that what has been thus enacted in Council be promulgated, to the glory of God.

Rome, at St. Peter's, 28 October, 1965.

I, Paul, Bishop of the Catholic Church.

There follow the signatures of the Fathers.

Footnotes:

- (1) Cf. Acts 17: 26
- (2) Cf. Wisdom 8: 1; Acts 14: 17; Romans 2: 6-7; 1 Timothy 2: 4.
- (3) Cf. Apocalypse 21: 23f.
- (4) Cf. 2 Corinthians 5: 18-19.
- (5) Cf. St. Gregory VII, Letter XXI to Anzir (Nacir), King of Mauritania (PL 148, col. 450 f.)
- (6) Cf. Galatians 3: 7.
- (7) Cf. Romans 11: 17-24.
- (8) Cf. Ephesians 2: 14-16.
- (9) Cf. Luke 19: 44.
- (10) Cf. Romans 11: 28.
- (11) Cf. Romans 11: 28-29; cf. Dogmatic Constitution, *Lumen Gentium* (Light of Nations), AAS, 55 (1965), p. 20.
- (12) Cf. Isaiah 66: 23; Psalm 65: 4; Romans 11: 11-32.
- (13) Cf. John 19: 6.
- (14) Cf. Romans 12: 18.
- (15) Cf. Matthew 5: 45.

Appendix 6. Extract from Karl Barth (1956: 425-6)

We can expect this hidden neighbour, who stands outside the visible Church, just because there is a visible Church. We are obviously referred to him by at least some of the statements made in Scripture about the Gentiles. The Gentiles, with their worship of false gods, are the dark background before which the redemptive dealings of God with His people and Church take place. They are also the object of the Church's mission and proclamation. As those who are one day to be assembled on Mount Zion, they are the content of one of the prophecies of the last days. But in individual figures whom we must not overlook, they also have a present place in the redemptive history attested by the Bible. They are strangers, and yet as such adherents; strangers who as such have some very important and decisive things to say to the children of the household; strangers who from the most unexpected distances come right into the apparently closed circle of the divine election and calling and carry out a kind of commission, fulfil an office for which there is no name, but the content of which is quite obviously a service which they have to render. We can think of the Balaam, Numbers 22-24, who is to curse Israel, but instead he must irresistibly bless. We can think of the harlot Rahab who, according to Joshua 2:12, 'had mercy' on the Israelite spies, and who was therefore justified by her works according to James 2:25, and saved by her faith according to Hebrews 11:31. We can think of the Moabitess Ruth and her loyalty to the humiliated Israelitess Naomi, a loyalty which has no less reward than that she is made the ancestress of David and given prominence as such in Matthew 1:5. We can think of the co-operation of Hiram, King of Tyre, in the building of Solomon's temple (1 Kings 5:15f.). We can think of the sayings and gifts of the Queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10:1f.). We can think of the Syrian captain Naaman (2 Kings 5:1f.). We can think of the wonderful role ascribed to the Persian king Cyrus, not only in Deutero-Isaiah but also in the book of Ezra. And in the New Testament we can think of the wise men who came with their offerings from the East (Matthew 2:1f.); of the centurion of Capernaum, who, according to Matthew 8:10f., had such a faith as Jesus had not found in Israel, and led him to speak of the many who shall come from the East, from the West and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob; of the Syro-Phoenician woman (Mark 7:24f.); of the centurion at the cross with his messianic confession (Mark 15:39); of the centurion Cornelius at Caesarea, in whose house Peter learns that 'in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him' (Acts 10:35). That these biblical

figures must be regarded as in any way the representatives of a general revelation is excluded by the context of all these passages. The most remarkable of them all is the Melchisedek, King of Salem, and a 'priest of the most high God', who brings bread and wine to Abraham, and blesses him and receives from him a tithe (Genesis 14:18f.). He reappears in the royal Psalm 110:4, again mysteriously as the representative of an otherwise unmentioned priestly order, by which even the Elect of Yahweh seems to be measured. According to Hebrews 5:6f., 6:20, 7:1f., he is the type of Jesus Christ Himself and of His supreme and definitive high priesthood. It is therefore not merely legitimate but obligatory to regard the figure of Melchisedek as the hermeneutic key to this whole succession. It is not on the basis of a natural knowledge of God and a relationship with God that all these strangers play their striking role. What happens is that in them Jesus Christ proclaims Himself to be the great Samaritan: as it were, in a second and outer circle of His revelation, which by its very nature can only be hinted at. It must be noted that no independent significance can be ascribed to any of the revelations as we can call them in a wider sense. There is no Melchisedek apart from Abraham, just as there is no Abraham apart from Jesus Christ. They have no Word of God to preach. They are not witnesses of the resurrection. They have no full power to summon to the love of God. In this they differ permanently and fundamentally from the prophets and apostles, as does their function from that of the Church. Their witness is a confirmatory and not a basic witness. But granted that there are prophets and apostles, granted there is a people of God and a Church, granted that God is already loved, they have the authority and the power to summon those who love God to the praise of God which is meet and acceptable to Him. If we know the incarnation of the eternal Word and the glorification of humanity in Him, we cannot pass by any man, without being asked whether in his humanity he does not have this mission to us, he does not become to us this compassionate neighbour.

Glossary of Muslim terms

- *'asr*: afternoon prayer, prayed when the shadow of an object is the same length as the object's height (though this can vary outside a certain latitude of the Earth's surface)
- *Ahl al-Kitab*: people of the book, principally Christians and Jews
- *al haq*: the truth, or the Truth
- *dawa*: invitation to Islam, sometimes understood more negatively as propaganda
- *hadith* (plural: *ahadith*): tradition or saying of the Prophet and his companions
- *hajj*: the pilgrimage to Mecca, the fifth pillar of Islam
- *halal*: permitted, opposite of *haram* (q.v.)
- *haram*: forbidden, opposite of *halal* (q.v.)
- *ibadat*: worship, obedience, worship through obedience to the pillars of Islam
- *Imam*: in Sunni Islam, someone who leads prayers or teaches in a mosque; in Shi'a Islam, one of the successors to the Prophet; the Ismailis are led by the 'living Imam', at present Prince Aga Khan IV, who claims succession through the line of Shi'a Imams
- *iman*: faith
- *Injil*: the Gospel; the book believed by Muslims to have been revealed to the Prophet 'Issa (Jesus)
- *jami*: mosque in which the *khutba* (q.v.) is preached (Maghrebian Arabic term)
- *jihad*: effort or struggle, the great *jihad* is the struggle to control one's 'baser instincts', the lesser *jihad* may involve holy war
- *khutba*: sermon preached in a mosque at the *jummah* (Friday noon) prayer
- *madrassah*: Islamic or Qur'anic school, in Britain it is normally used for teaching Islam to children outside of school hours
- *masjid*: mosque
- *maslak* (plural: *masalik*): path or way, a discrete school of Islamic thought and practice with some kind of central organisation

- *pir*: a spiritual leader or guide of a Sufi order
- *shahada*: witness, the first pillar of Islam, the statement *ashadu anna la-ilaha illa Allah* (I bear witness that there is no god but Allah)
- *Sheikh*: leader of a Sufi order, teacher, saint, descendent of the Prophet
- *tariqa*: path or way, applied mainly to a Sufi order
- *ummah*: community, tribe or nation, specifically the imagined or aspired community of all the world's Muslims

Glossary of French terms

- *affaire du foulard*: headscarf affair, also referred to as *affaire du voile* (affair of the veil)
- *assimilation*: the concept of assimilation into a single French nation and culture
- *Beurs*: the immediate descendants of migrants from North Africa to France; the term, coined by the actors themselves, is a *verlan* (slang inversion) of the word *Arabe* (Arab)
- *Front National*: extreme right-wing and anti-immigration party in France, led, at the time of writing, by Jean-Marie Le Pen
- *HLMs*: *Habitations à Loyer Modéré* (low rent housing); council flats
- *intégrisme*: often used in the same sense as ‘fundamentalism’ in English, strictly refers to a late nineteenth-century movement in Spanish Catholicism
- *Islamologie*: the academic study of Islam and of Muslims, arguably more social scientific in its approach than is Islamic studies
- *laïcité*: a secular system established by law
- *sans papiers*: literally ‘without papers’, refers to people who were legally resident in France until a change in the residence laws made their presence illegal

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